This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

600071763U

MAXWELL DREWITT.

A Novel.

By F. G. TRAFFORD,

AUTHOR OF "GEORGE GEITH," "CITY AND SUBURB," "PHEMIE KELLER," "TOO MUCH ALONE."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

Third Edition.

LONDON:

TINSLEY BROTHERS, 18, CATHERINE STREET, STRAND.

1865.

[*The right of Translation is reserved.*]

250. f. 276

LONDON: PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, STAMFORD STREET
AND CHARING CROSS.

CONTENTS TO VOL. II.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE

MAN AND BEAST 1

CHAPTER II.

POOR JENNY 18

CHAPTER III.

MASTER HAROLD 36

CHAPTER IV.

A LITTLE POLITICAL ECONOMY 61

CHAPTER V.

DURROW 86

CHAPTER VI.

A LITTLE LEAP 108

CHAPTER VII.

HELP 127

CHAPTER VIII.

BRIAN'S DIFFICULTIES 144

CHAPTER IX.

PAGE

AT THE DAWNING 163

CHAPTER X.

AFTER THE FUNERAL 179

CHAPTER XI.

FAREWELL 201

CHAPTER XII.

THE HOUR OF SUCCESS 218

CHAPTER XIII.

ON THE WAY TO DUBROW 239

CHAPTER XIV.

ANOTHER DIFFICULTY 259

CHAPTER XV.

HAROLD IN TROUBLE 276

MAXWELL DREWITT.

CHAPTER I.

MAN AND BEAST.

THERE is a great pathos about the life of a common man, about the story of any one whose wishes are moderate, whose pleasures are limited, whose hopes are small, whose way through existence is along the river instead of across the sea, adown the valley rather than over the mountains; and for this reason that little deserted cottage close by Duranmore Bay, looking white and ghostly in the moonlight, was as pitiful an object as Maxwell Drewitt's eyes could have rested on.

No person knew better how Ryan had loved that cottage; how he had delighted in the look

out over the bay, in the view up the ravine. He had seen him pacing beside the stream and superintending the mowing of his little crop of hay. He remembered the various articles of additional furniture with which Ryan had adorned the rooms in honour of Jenny's arrival; how he had planted creepers by the porch, and nailed trellis-work together for the honeysuckle and the clematis to clamber over; how he had laid out his little garden sloping towards the south, and filled it with London-pride and lavender, with red daisies and hepaticas, with cabbage roses and sweet Williams, with daffodils, and pinks, and southernwood, and tulips, and gentianallas, and all the common flowers which are so beautiful in their homely simplicity and sweetness.

As a man plants and sows and beautifies for his wife that is to be, so Ryan, knowing, that dream could return no more, that love could never come back again with its freshness, planted and sowed and beautified for the young sister who was going to make his house a home for him at last.

All this Maxwell Drewitt remembered. He recollected also what a different man Ryan seemed

after his sister's return; how much more comfortable he appeared to be; how he used to hurry home from Duranmore to his little cottage; how busy he was wont to make himself with spade, and rake, and hoe.

The simple pleasures of a common life came back to Maxwell's memory separately and singly with the power of a curse. He had driven Ryan away from Inchnagawn; it was he who had laid the garden waste; he who had broken down the trellis-work and left the cottage desolate.

As regarded the horsewhipping, he and Ryan had long been even; for Maxwell had worked on and on till he got Waller's agency withdrawn from Ryan and given to a *protégé* of Mr. Samuel Turner.

He had made no secret of this to the lawyer, for he knew for his sister's sake Mr. Ryan would make no complaint of unfairness to Mr. Waller.

"You'll spy again, Ryan, will you?" he asked.

"Yes, and thrash you again if I catch you meddling with her," was the spirited reply.

At which answer Maxwell laughed.

"I owe you a good turn for your interference, though I have done you a bad one for meddling

in my affairs. But for you, I really think I should have married Miss Bourke."

"I am greatly obliged for the intended condescension," said Ryan.

"You would have been more obliged to me for the actual condescension, I suppose?" suggested Maxwell.

"I told you once I would rather put Jenny in her coffin than give her to you," answered the other.

"Nonsense," retorted young Drewitt; "you only said that because you thought I never would ask her honourably."

"Repeat that sentence—I wish you would repeat it," said Ryan, facing round on his tormentor, who, however, declined to oblige him.

"You understood my meaning well enough. I need not go over the ground again. You are wrong. There was a time when I loved your sister very much; when—when I might have made a lady of her. But you cured me of my folly; and I vowed then to be revenged. I am revenged. Let bygones be bygones."

The pair had never ceased to be on speaking terms. Maxwell was too wise and Ryan too care-

ful to permit the little world of Duranmore to imagine there was any open rupture between them.

They nodded in the street, they shook hands when they met in a room; only Ryan did not go to Headlands, and Maxwell never entered Ryan's office in Duranmore. Ryan never ceased keeping a watchful eye on Jenny, and Maxwell carried his pebble in his pocket, and turned it every now and then, biding his time.

He had sworn to be revenged, and he was revenged. Did that fact comfort him now, as he looked down on Inchnagawn, lying white and silent in the moonlight?

This man had owned no wide acres, no fine park, no great house. He had but a little patch of land, and behold he was cast out of it! He had been doing very well, and all at once the ground was cut from below his feet. Every man over whom Maxwell had any influence left him and went to the opposition lawyer. Poor Ryan's conduct had not in all cases been above fear and above reproach; and Maxwell, having once been his confidant, fought and killed him with his own weapons.

He had almost to commence again, and there were times when he thought of leaving Duran-

more altogether, and seeking his fortune elsewhere.

That was what Maxwell wanted to make him do. He wished to see the back of Mr. Timothy Ryan, and of his sister also.

It was the old story of the poor man and his ewe lamb over again. Ryan had not much, but what he had Maxwell took from him. Maxwell was gaining great possessions; but, like Ahab, he longed for the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite as well.

Besides, Ryan knew too much of him and of his affairs, and he desired to be rid of his former friend. When you have made all the use you can of a weapon, it is as well to break it, so that the steel may not prove dangerous in other hands. That was what Maxwell wanted to do. He wished to get Ryan out of his way, and he had not stood over-nice about compassing his end.

Was it pleasant for him to remember these things as he rode slowly homeward under the moonlight? Was there nothing pathetic even to him in Ryan's worn face, in Jenny's pale cheeks?

"If she will marry Connor," was the conclusion Mr. Maxwell Drewitt arrived at that night, "I

will try to push him on; but I cannot do anything for her brother. He must leave Duranmore."

And Jenny at that very moment was lying awake in the moonlight, thinking, with the tears in her eyes, of him; whilst Ryan was sitting in his office, facing his affairs and cogitating concerning ways and means.

Maxwell could have made them both happy, had he chosen; but he elected not to make them happy, and fell asleep contented.

There had been many minor changes in Duranmore during the four years I have spoken of. There was an opposition doctor in the town, and another attorney. A queer old bachelor had taken up his quarters, for a permanency apparently, at the "Marsden Arms." Mr. Murphy was gone to London, from which place he sent occasionally notes of rare and exquisite cases to Dr. Sheen, who, not having the same enthusiasm for his profession, thought that the "good old way" seemed best after all.

"I cannot help fancying," he wrote back on one occasion to his late assistant, "that the operation you mention (laryngotomy) must have been excruciatingly painful to the patient.'

"No doubt it was," replied Mr. Murphy, in dudgeon; "but, good God, sir, consider how interesting!"

"That is all very true," remarked Dr. Sheen to Mr. Murphy's successor, "but I never was fond of diseases out of the common;" which was all the more fortunate for Dr. Sheen, as he did not meet with many singular cases amongst his patients, and could not have cured them if he had.

The most out-of-the-way ailment he ever had to puzzle over was that of an old lady named Connor, who lived with her son in the cottage near Eversbeg Head (on the Duranmore side), which, at the time Mrs. Drewitt first beheld the Atlantic, was tenanted by a retired sea captain.

Mrs. Connor's complaint was gastric carcinoma—a disease which was, in those days, to the faculty precisely what an unclassified animal or a strange fish proves to the naturalist. Mr. Murphy would have been enchanted with the case, but not so Doctor Sheen.

To Mrs. Connor herself it seemed as terrible an affliction as could have been laid upon her. She found nothing interesting or entertaining in the matter. It was dying by inches. It was sinking,

in the ocean with help all around. It was wasting off the face of the earth under the influence of a disease more depressing than consumption, and equally hopeless—a disease of which science could give no account—for which skill could prescribe no remedy.

There were no alternations in this ailment—no days of hope, no times of relief. It was like hiring a hearse, and driving by slow stages to the grave. It was not life; it was not death; but it was dying, day after day, week after week, month after month, with starvation for the end.

Starvation, though she had plenty of nourishment, and was able to eat. A disease as strange and inexplicable to the spectator as perplexing to a doctor; a disease for which there was no cure but death, no palliation but patience; in which there was no stay, no pause—which picked the flesh off her bones, and pinched her cheeks, and exhausted her strength, and tried her temper—which it was hard to bear alone in that solitary cottage by the sea-shore.

Her son could not stay with her all the day. He had to be away from early in the morning till six o'clock in the evening, at the marble quarries,

where he was a kind of overseer, and both mother and son consequently felt very grateful when Jenny Bourke took her needlework in her hand, and went to pass a few hours at Duranmore Cottage.

She was quiet and sad enough in these days, it is true; but she seemed none the less sweet and loveable for that. She would sing her plaintive songs, and talk to the old lady about her ailments, and lead her out in the sunshine round by Eversbeg Head, or up towards the mountains where the marble quarries were; and poor Mrs. Connor took kindly to the girl, and prayed her when she was gone to try and love Dennis, and become in due time his wife.

But Jenny only shook her head.

It was a few days after Maxwell's night ride home from Cragantlet that Jenny and Mrs. Connor climbed to the top of Eversbeg Head—no great ascent after all—and sat them down there.

The summer's sun was shining over the scene—over the wide Atlantic, over Duranmore and Eversbeg Bays, over the old Abbey, and over the

Headlands, towards which Jenny's eyes turned longingly.

She had not seen Maxwell for some time, and she loved him. How much? More than Dennis Connor loved her; more than Jenny could ever love any one again.

The two women sat side by side, each busy with her own thoughts. Mrs. Connor was gazing over the fair earth, upon which she should so soon have to close her eyes. Jenny was looking at Maxwell's home and wishing she could see him.

Jenny was a good little soul, and she had a kind heart beating in her breast; and she was very sorry for Mrs. Connor, and very glad to help her to while away the time; but, yet, Jenny was not quite disinterested.

Duranmore Cottage was not a great distance from Headlands, and she could sometimes catch a glimpse of Maxwell.

She caught a glimpse of him on the day in question when he came with a new horse Lady Emmeline had sent him along the avenue from his house.

The drive was rough and the horse intractable.

So Maxwell led him up to the main road, accompanied on his way so far by a couple of his men, who were curious to see the animal in harness.

The creature had been used to the saddle, and rebelled against the indignity of a vehicle. He had been used likewise to jib, but a pair of spurs prevented much harm coming of that habit, so long as he had a rider on his back. With a conveyance behind him, however, the case was different; and the moment Maxwell jumped into his tax-cart and touched the animal with his whip the brute began to back.

All this Jenny, from her seat among the grass and the heather, was able to see, and she could see also Maxwell shouting and gesticulating, although she could not hear what he said.

"Take his head, Lynch, and lead him on a bit," Mr. Drewitt ordered.

But leading him on proved a matter beyond Lynch's capability, for which reason Maxwell began flogging the creature unmercifully.

A jibbing horse being one of those circumstances which tries a man's temper too much, is, I think, one of those struggles which a woman ought never to see; but Jenny, being on the height above the

Headlands, could not help seeing, and neither could Mrs. Connor, for that matter.

"What a wretch—what a brute!" exclaimed the old lady indignantly.

"If the horse won't go on, what is he to do?" demanded Jenny, ready to do battle for Maxwell, though she could have run down the hill and prayed him to cease beating the creature for her sake.

For all the good flogging did, Maxwell might as well have flogged one of the granite pillars against which Lady Emmeline's present had backed the tax-cart, and after he had lashed the thong off his whip the young man sprang with a curse to the ground, and, taking the reins short in his hand, tugged and tore at the horse's mouth like a madman. And the more he tore the bit the higher the brute lifted his head, while he lowered his hind quarters and backed as well as he was able.

It was a trial of brute strength now. There was no skill, no horsemanship, no science in the matter; it was whose will should be fiercest, whose power greatest.

As I have said before, a man is not to be judged by his conduct towards a jibbing horse; but yet to

the outsider—to the spectator whose temper is not tried, whose blood is not up, whose strength is not defied—the struggle between an unreasoning animal with a bit in his mouth, with harness on his back, with a conveyance behind him, and a man free to go, free to think, free to act, always seems cowardly and terrible.

With her breath coming thick and short, Jenny watched the combat. A woman cannot bear these kind of struggles, perhaps because she knows that in the hands of man she is oftentimes but as a creature having a bit in her mouth herself.

Which would win? Maxwell turned his whip in his hand and struck the horse with the butt-end again and again, with such force that Jenny could hear the blows, and feel each stroke go through her own tender heart.

He sent for a heavy cart-whip and showered blows on the animal with that. His men took each a wheel and shoved, while he kicked and damned and flogged.

"That man is a perfect devil!" said Mrs. Connor, solemnly.

"Let us go, oh, let us go!" cried Jenny, rising; but still fascinated, she stood still and watched.

Then she saw that which through all her after life it made her turn sick and faint to remember—Maxwell stoop and scoop up a handful of gravel off the road.

"Get up," he said to one of the men, and the man jumped in and took the reins.

"Lash him on," continued Maxwell, and he handed the fellow the whip.

Then Maxwell thrust the gravel up the animal's nostrils, rubbing the small sharp stones into the quivering flesh; and while the creature, mad with pain, sprang forward, he leaped to his seat, and taking both reins and whip, kept flogging the horse far as Jenny's eyes could follow him.

"I think, Mrs. Connor, I will go home," she said, when she had walked in silence back to Duranmore Cottage, and helped Mrs. Connor off with her shawl and settled her in her chair by the window. "I think that horse has made me feel a little ill."

Mrs. Connor looked into the girl's face as she said this, and saw there what she never told to Dennis, or Jenny, or any human being; only she sat for a long time after Jenny left her, crying all alone.

Meanwhile Jenny walked back to Duranmore,

heart-sick, faint, and weary, and when she was near her own door she was met by Mrs. Sheen, the doctor's wife—for among other changes, Dr. Sheen had taken unto himself a wife—who said:

"How pale you look, Miss Bourke! What is wrong with you?"

"I have walked too far in the heat, Mrs. Sheen," answered Jenny. "I sat out in the sun with poor Mrs. Connor, and it has made me feel faint."

"It is no wonder Mr. Connor is fond of you," replied Mrs. Sheen, with a knowing look; "but you must not overdo the thing, my dear. Even for his sake you must not."

"I do not know what you mean at all," answered Jenny; but she blushed up to the roots of her hair, nevertheless.

"I did not mean anything, of course," explained Mrs. Sheen; "and talking of marriages—have you heard the news?"

"News! I did not know there was ever any news in Duranmore," said Jenny.

"There is news now, at any rate," was the reply. "Mr. Maxwell Drewitt is going to be married to Lady Emmeline Vervensoe."

The houses danced up and down before Jenny's eyes, and the street went round and round.

"Will you tell me all about it to-morrow?" she asked, while she felt blindly about for the wall, and held on by a window-sill. "I feel so sick and faint now, Mrs. Sheen."

"Had not I better bid the Doctor come round and see you?" said the lady; but Jenny answered:

"It is only the heat. I shall be well to-morrow."

Then she walked into the house and ran up the staircase, and locked herself into her own room, where she fell on the floor in a dead swoon

CHAPTER II.

POOR JENNY.

It was on a Monday that Maxwell Drewitt proposed to Lady Emmeline, and on the following Friday he was coming along the road leading from Eversbeg to Duranmore, when he met a pale-faced, large-eyed girl, who told him she wanted to speak to him.

"Not now, Jenny," he said. "I am going up to a party at Kincorth. Wait for a day or two."

"If I wait any longer I shall die," she answered. "I must speak to you. Timothy is away, and I have been watching for you all the afternoon. Let me ask you something now, and then go to your party if you like."

"We cannot stand talking on the road here, Jenny," he answered; "but I tell you what," he

added, seeing the look of despair in her poor tearful eyes: "meet me at twelve, in the summer-house at the top of the fall (you know the summer-house). I will be there."

"Upon your honour?" she asked.

"Upon my soul," he replied, and the pair parted. She walked forward to Mrs. Connor's, and he went on to Kincorth.

It was a quiet party, given in honour of Maxwell's engagement. The Drewitts did not think well of the match, and for that reason they were, perhaps, a little over-anxious to be cordial to Lady Emmeline.

It was a good thing for Maxwell, Mr. and Mrs. Drewitt agreed; and yet Mrs. Drewitt knew a younger woman would have appeared to her better.

Such a union was likely to give Maxwell all he had lost through his father's unlucky marriage, but still it seemed unnatural to see so young a man selling himself for money.

Nevertheless, the Drewitts were bound to be pleased: the head of the family was expected to hold out the right hand of fellowship to Lady Emmeline, and Mr. and Mrs. Drewitt had accord-

ingly driven over to Cragantlet and invited the widow to a very quiet party in honour of the event.

On account of Lady Emmeline's bereavement dancing would have been improper, but, looking towards her impending marriage, music was permissible.

It was a musical party therefore—that is, dinner and music. Only very intimate friends on both sides were invited, such as the Munks and Marsdens and Hickmans and Dolf Vervensoe, who began at once to pay marked attentions to Laura Munks, which attentions caused the heart of her honourable mother to leap for joy.

Miss Macpherson came with the Munks. Mrs. Drewitt had asked her to come, greatly on account of her musical attainments, which would, that poor lady hoped, cause the evening to go off all the more pleasantly.

Lady Emmeline was in great force: she put on her deepest mourning, and flourished her widest hem-stitched pocket-handkerchief. She kissed Mrs. Drewitt and Wilhelmima, and Master Brian and Miss Geraldine, and pressed Mr. Drewitt's hand with emotion.

And Mr. Drewitt pressed Lady Emmeline's, and the pair had a little private conversation in the embrasure of one of the drawing-room windows; and Mr. Drewitt wept, and Lady Emmeline wept, and the two exchanged sentiments of regard and vows of eternal friendship.

To do the poetess justice, she did not care one straw about money. Give her Maxwell, and she was indifferent to filthy lucre. Had he owned Kincorth fifty times over she could not have been fonder of him. It is pitiful to think how far good looks go with women: how much better she liked this handsome young fellow than she had ever cared for her far-honester husband.

Well-a-day, well-a-day! so the world goes, and so the world will go till the Millennium.

Of all the company, Maxwell himself was, I think, the most uncomfortable.

A man takes kindly enough to having honours thrust upon him, but he feels awkward when a select party is invited to see the process.

Besides, though he loved money he hated marriage; and, above all, was there not a poor soft-hearted little girl crying her eyes out for his sake?

Poor child! poor Jenny! She was in his memory all that evening. He could not see Lady Emmeline for thinking of her when the widow spoke; and as for Miss Macpherson, there were some people whom Maxwell always detested, and Miss Macpherson was one of them; for this was part of the song that terrible Scotchwoman elected to sing with a pathos utterly indescribable, while Maxwell Drewitt stood beside his aunt, digging his nails into his flesh, and cursing the poet who wrote the words and the woman who sung them with all his heart and soul and strength.

Was ever a more mournful song penned, reader, than that from which Miss Macpherson selected four sorrowful verses? Four verses, sorrowful and beautiful. Here they are:—

"My head is like to rend, Willie,
My heart is like to break;
I'm wearin' aff my feet, Willie,
I'm dyin' for your sake:
Oh! lay your cheek to mine, Willie,
Your hand upon my head;
Oh! say ye'll think on me, Willie,
When I am cold and dead.

"It's vain to comfort me, Willie,
Sair grief maun hae its will;
But let me rest upon your breast,
To sab and greet my fill;

Let me sit on your knee, Willie,
Let me shed by your hair,
And look into the face, Willie,
I never may see mair.

"I'm weary o' this warld, Willie,
And sick wi' all I see;
I canna live as I hae lived,
Or be as I should be;
But fauld into your heart, Willie,
The heart that still is thine,
And kiss ance mair the white, white cheek
Ye said was red lang syne.

"The lav'rock in the lift, Willie,
That lilts far ower our heid,
Will sing the morn as merrilie
Aboun the clay cauld deid;
And this green turf we're sittin' on,
Wi' dewdrops shimmerin' sheen,
Will hap the heart that luvit thee
As warld has seldom seen."*

After the manner of all Scotch poems, the original was of great length. If Maxwell had heard the whole of it I think he would have sacrificed Miss Macpherson in his uncle's drawing-room.

* The whole of this ballad is to be found in a curious collection of Scotch songs entitled "Whistle Binkie." The book is somewhat rare, and I do not chance to have it by me at the moment; but I believe the verses quoted above were written by Motherwell; and I know that they, as well as the "King's Ride," referred to in Vol. I. (the name of the author of which I am unable to learn), have recently been most charmingly set to music by Miss Elizabeth Philp.

How long that evening seemed! How unendurable! How intolerable it was to listen to the chitter-chatter of a dozen female tongues! How plainly he could see the rouge on Lady Emmeline's cheeks! How he hated the affectation of her manners! How sick the little flutter she pretended to feel made him! How he wished to heaven he could break Dolf Vervensoe's head for his sly allusions, for his meaning looks!

Miss Macpherson sang, and Mrs. Drewitt sang, and Laura Munks sang, and Lady Emmeline was induced to "join in."

Then they had tea handed round, and the card-tables were brought out, and the old stagers played whist, while the young people flirted, and Lady Emmeline sat talking demurely to Mr. Drewitt, and Maxwell walked from window to window looking forth at the view on which the moon was just rising. It must be getting on for twelve he knew by that, and thinking of Jenny, he went across to Lady Emmeline, and after leaning over the back of her chair and whispering a few compliments in her ear, reminded her how late it was getting.

"You will come with me as far as Eversbeg,"

she suggested; but Maxwell told her he thought of remaining at Kincorth for the night, upon which she rose to go.

"Time has passed so pleasantly, Mrs. Drewitt," said Lady Emmeline, "that I had not the least idea of the hour." And the widow, after a tender farewell of the Drewitt family, swept down to her carriage, attended by Maxwell and his uncle.

Her departure was the signal for the remainder of the party to disperse; and accordingly, with a great clattering of horses' hoofs, and banging to of carriage doors, and putting up of carriage steps, the guests drove off, and left Kincorth quiet and lonely in the moonlight.

Then Maxwell bade Mrs. Drewitt good-night, and took his hat, spite of Mr. Drewitt's entreaties for him to stay.

"Thank you, no," answered Maxwell, "I cannot remain. I told Lady Emmeline I thought I should, but I forgot then that a man said he would come to me to-morrow morning at seven about some stock, and I should not care to have to walk over from here so early as all that comes to. Good-night, sir."

"Good-night, Maxwell, and I wish you every

happiness. I think you have made a most prudent choice," finished Mr. Drewitt, wringing his nephew's hand; which piece of commendation elicited the remark, "D—n my choice and your thoughts too," from Maxwell, as he walked down the drive.

When he had got well among the trees he left the gravelled walk, and made his way through the plantations to the glen mentioned in an early chapter.

Many a time he and Jenny had met in that glen during the last two years, for it was a lonely place where strangers were sure never to intrude, and where the family rarely penetrated. At the very top of the glen stood the ruined summer-house, going fast to wreck and decay. The roof let in the wet, the floor was damp and grass-grown, the seats were broken and crazy. It was nearly a mile away from the mansion, and as solitary and deserted a spot for a meeting of the kind as can well be imagined.

As he climbed up the steep path which led to it from the glen, Maxwell, looking at the summer-house perched on the very top of the waterfall, saw a woman leaning against the rustic pillars that formed the entrance.

"You are late," she said; "I thought you were not going to come;" and she dropped back the shawl she had put over her head, and the white sad face was lifted appealingly to his in the moonlight.

"Have I ever disappointed you, Jenny?" he asked, and he kissed her cold lips while the girl clung to him in a kind of passionate despair.

"They told me you were going to be married," she whispered; "it is not true? tell me it is not true."

If there had been any use in telling her a lie he would have done it; but he knew it must come to this sooner or later, and so he held his peace, and turned aside his head.

"Why don't you look at me?" she cried; "why don't you answer?" And then, in her extremity, she fell on her knees before him, and prayed him say it was false, it was not true.

He lifted her from the ground, and took her in his arms, and held her to his heart, and kissed her over and over again; but still he said nothing, while she kept moaning out—

"It's not true! You never could be so fond of me, and marry another woman."

"If I were married to twenty women I could never be so fond of one of them as I am of you," he answered.

"But you are not going to be married? Say it was an untruth they told me—say so, for God's sake!"

"What can it matter, Jenny?" he replied. "I will never love any one as I love you. I swear that."

"But you promised to marry *me!*" Jenny broke out, tearing herself from his embrace, and facing him as he stood silent and pale in the moonlight. "You swore that to me. You said whenever you had money enough you would marry me, and that then, when we were married, Timothy would soon come round. You did, you know you did! and if it was a lie, God pardon you, Maxwell Drewitt, and God help me!"

She sank to the earth once more, not kneeling this time, but crouching, with her hands covering her face, with her head bent forward on her lap, crying—crying, oh! so terribly.

And the moonlight lay on tree and ocean and field—on Duranmore down by the shore, on the great mountains, and the smaller hills.

"You will marry me, Maxwell?" she sobbed at last, and she seized his hands in hers, and covered them with tears and kisses. "You cannot mean to desert me after all. You cannot leave me to face the world's scorn. I would do my best to please you. I would never ask to go out with you to any place, or to be your equal, or to know your concerns. Only marry me, for the love of God!"

"I told you before," he answered huskily, "that I can never love any woman but you; and as long as I love you, what does it matter whether I am married or single?"

"Maybe it does not matter to you," she said; "but to me—to me——"

"You will marry somebody else, Jenny, and look back upon all this as a foolish dream—a foolish happy dream."

"It's a dream that's mighty like reality," she answered. "I wish it was a dream!" went on the girl, passionately. "I wish that I could wake now and know that all that has passed was only a dream! If I could go back to what I was when I first met you, I'd die happy. I wouldn't care that this was my last night on earth."

"Jenny—Jenny!" he remonstrated.

"I'm thinking that the water down by there looks mighty quiet," she continued, looking with her great sorrowful eyes away to the sea. "If I could get anybody to row me out far enough that I'd never come ashore, I'd drown myself. Timothy would be sorry, but he would not be half as sorry as he will be if I don't do it."

Maxwell could not bear this. He made her get up, and drew her back to the firmest of the seats, and sat down beside her, and laid the poor tired head on his breast and tried to comfort her. There had been a time when his lightest caress made Jenny's heart leap with joy; but nothing he could say or do would comfort her now. "Marry me, marry me!" she kept crying, and she twined her arms round his neck and told him how their sin had found them out; how it was because she knew she could keep their secret no longer that she wanted him to save her from shame.

For a minute, Maxwell sat stunned; a sickening remorse came over him. Her child!—and she was little more than a child when he first met her. Her child!—Maxwell knew now the reason of her

pale thin cheeks, of her unusual importunity, of her longing look towards the quiet sea.

"Oh! Jenny, Jenny, I wish we had never seen one another," he cried out at last; "I wish I had never looked at your pretty face, my darling!"

"And it's I that wish I had never seen you!" she answered, "or that I had died before this ever came to pass; before I ever was the bad girl I have been, and brought trouble and disgrace on the one that knew you better than I did. What are you going to do now?" she demanded, with a sudden access of indignation. "Are you going to marry me or leave me?—going to desert me or shelter me from the storm? You will marry me, Maxwell, won't you? Now that you know all, you will not forsake me?"

And she put her "cheek against his cheek," and took his hand and held it upon her heart, while she begged him to have mercy, while she craved him to have pity, in tones that Maxwell Drewitt remembered at his dying hour.

But she did not know with whom she had to deal. The very reason she assigned would have been powerful enough to prevent Maxwell fulfilling his promise. Should the finger of scorn be

pointed at him?—should the purity of his wife be questioned? He would as soon have thought of marrying the vilest of women as of mating with Jenny now. And he had brought her to this, with his lying words, with his false tongue, with his fair promises! He had found her young and guileless and loving, and she was sitting now with the moonlight streaming on her pale face, ruined and betrayed. That was a pleasant memory for him when "the door of the house came to be shut," when the noise of the outer world sounded no longer in his ears, when there was no future of life stretching out before him—but only silence, and sickness, and recollection in the darkened chamber, in the lonely room.

"Would he marry her?"

No. But Maxwell was at immense pains to explain why he could not do so: how he was very, very poor; how he was only marrying Lady Emmeline for her money; how he would always spare enough for Jenny; how, though another woman might own his name, no one but Jenny should own his heart. He tried to work upon her feelings; he tried to get her to be self-sacrificing for the sake of the love she bore him. "You

would not like to see me struggling for bread all my days?" he finished: "you would not like to ruin me and keep me poor till the end of my life?"

"You ought to have thought about that before you ruined me," she answered. "You talk to me as if money could give me back what I have lost, when I would cheerfully beg my bread from door to door if only I could be what I once was; if I only could!"

"But, Jenny," he answered, "why should you be ruined at all? There's a man who would marry you to-morrow—Connor. Marry him, and then——"

He stopped in his sentence, for the girl rose up at his words and looked him in the face. She unwound his arm from about her, she put his hand away from her face, she lifted her head from his shoulder and stood in the moonlight staring at the man she loved with an incredulous surprise.

"And it's that you want me to do?" she said. "And it's your child you would have me pass off on him as his?—and that's the way you think you'll get rid of me? But you're mistaken; you're wrong this time. I'll tell Timothy; I'll tell Lady Emme-

line; I'll tell your uncle, and I'll see if there isn't one of them will have me righted. Marry Dennis! Oh! Father of Heaven, what is this at all, at all?" and she rushed out of the summer-house and down the glen, sobbing as she went.

He picked up her shawl and followed her. It did not take much pleading on his part to make her promise that she would not fulfil her threat—that she would not go and blazon her wrongs about.

She blazed up into a passion one moment, but was calm the next.

"I will do well for you, Maxwell," she said, "though you have done ill for me. I will keep your secret, if it kill me. I will be faithful to you, though you have been false to me. I won't have any money; but I won't drown myself: I promise you, and I don't break my word. Let me pass you. Don't kiss me again—don't; you belong to another woman now, and I hope—I do hope she will make you as happy as I would have tried to do!"

"I cannot let you go, Jenny," he said. "I love you, and you only, still." And he kissed her as he never kissed another on earth, with passionate

tenderness, with a hungry affection, with a despairing remorse—kissed her while the tears ran down her white cheeks, and the stream trickled at their feet, and the roar of the waterfall sounded in their ears, and the trees stirred their branches in the light wind which went rustling and murmuring among the trees.

Then he wrapped the shawl which she wore for disguise, like the country people, gently about her, and pulled it over her head. And thus they parted, so far as meeting and loving and trusting was concerned, for ever.

It is not in all cases parting to be separated from those we love by absence or death, by distance or the grave.

There are worse partings than those on the deck of the outward-bound ship, or by the dying beds of the dear ones we have walked with through years—worse partings, between two who may yet hear each other's voices, and touch each other's hands, and look in each other's faces, day after day.

CHAPTER III.

MASTER HAROLD.

THERE was little change in Connemara—in the general aspect of the country I mean—and yet the suns of sixteen summers had risen and set upon the mountains since Maxwell Drewitt rode home from Cragantlet under the moonlight—since, under the moonlight also, Jenny Bourke accepted the sorrow that was inevitable, and went away through the night, crying silently.

There were the mountains, grand and stern and rugged as ever; there were the desolate lakes, the dreary bogs, the huge boulders, the endless bays, the rocky headlands, the grassy promontories washed by the wide ocean.

To look at the country, any one might have

thought only a new day had dawned upon the earth; and it was a new day indeed, but one twenty years after that summer afternoon when you, reader, first looked into the parlour of Inchnagawn Cottage, and heard Maxwell Drewitt and Timothy Ryan talking about the new mistress who was coming home to Kincorth.

What are twenty years, when all is said and done, but as an hour in the life of the great hills? Twenty years! Man frets and troubles himself through the third portion of almost his longest day, and the hills look on silently. Twenty years! Others come and go, are born and die, marry and have children, strive and plan, harass themselves, laugh and weep, rejoice and mourn, while the hills remain unchanged.

Twenty years! The mountains and the lakes and the ocean were the same—but the people! Ah! dear reader, no one but God in Heaven may ever know what the Irish suffered between the summer's day on which this story opened and the summer's day on which I take up my pen once more.

It was a lovely afternoon, towards the latter end of June. There had been rain in the early morn-

ing, but towards twelve o'clock the clouds dispersed, the sun broke out, and now, as the mail-coach, bound to arrive at Duranmore at five o'clock, stopped to change horses at Calgillan, ten miles distant, the traveller could not have desired a more beautiful day for his journey, or a finer country for his eyes to wander over. Fine, not with cultivation, but by nature. Grand with hills—well-wooded here and there too—with waterfalls dashing down the mountain-sides, with rapid rivers pursuing their course onward to the sea. The road leading from Calgillan to Duranmore was far the most picturesque approach to the little town which could have been selected, and it was because of its beauty that two English gentlemen chose it for their route.

The younger of these two men had never visited Ireland before; the elder had been in Connemara twenty years previously, when he stood for Duranmore and lost the day. Henry Pryor was coming back, after all those years, to look at a property which was for sale near Duranmore, and if he liked, to buy it.

Whilst he remained in Connemara he was going to be the guest of Maxwell Drewitt, Esq., of the

Headlands; and Maxwell Drewitt, Esq., had kindly offered to extend his hospitality to Mr. Francis Gyton, whose father was principal in the great firm of Gyton, Lark, Munday, Hatfield and Company, Austinfriars, London.

Mr. Gyton, senior, was a millionaire—Mr. Gyton, junior, was rather a fast young man, who went down to the City and "looked in" at the office as seldom as he could help, whose health required continual absences from town, and who, consequently, the moment he heard his uncle intended visiting Ireland, offered to accompany him.

Calgillan was not a town, merely a straggling village lying among the hills, and Mr. Gyton employed himself during the time that was occupied in taking the tired horses out and putting the fresh horses to in making depreciating remarks concerning the country and its inhabitants generally. He saw nothing picturesque except the short petticoats of the women.

"Like ballet girls, by Jove!" finished Mr. Gyton, who pronounced Jove Jauve, and surveyed Irish society through an eyeglass.

"You never saw a ballet girl half so pretty," answered a young lad who had travelled with

them for the last thirty miles, and who now stood with his hands in his pockets leaning against the wall of Joyce's Hotel.

"And how do you know anything about the matter?" asked Mr. Gyton, laughing, for he had been tormenting and chaffing the boy all the way, "you never saw a ballet girl in your life."

"I don't want to see one," retorted the other, sulkily; "but I know our women are prettier than the English women for all that, and our country is finer than England. You have no mountains like those where you came from;" and he pointed away towards the "Twelve Pins," which are the Alps of Connemara.

"No; our mountains are twenty times higher," said Mr. Gyton, laughing again.

"I could take you to a place where you might count a hundred lakes below you," went on the boy.

"Mill-ponds," observed the other.

"And you have no such fish in England as we have at our very doors."

"Ah! you never tasted whitebait, my boy."

"We're ready now, gentlemen, if you please,"

said the guard at this juncture, and all the passengers clambered up into their seats.

"There's a team!" Mr. Gyton leaned back from the box to whisper to the young Irish lad; "why, there's not a coachman in England would sit behind four such sorry nags."

"You never saw such a turn-out, at any rate," answered the boy.

"He's right, sir," interposed the driver. "Master Harold's right. You might travel England and Ireland through, and never meet with such a turn-out again."

"The horses are as thin as whipping-posts, and the harness is falling to pieces; but I should have thought that no such uncommon sight on this side the channel," replied Mr. Gyton.

"But we know—we know better, don't we, Master Harold?" chuckled the coachman, bringing his whip down cleverly on the off leader's flank as he spoke.

"Yes, Doyle, we know," answered the boy, and the pair laughed in chorus.

"What is remarkable about the turn-out?" asked Mr. Pryor, who had for some time been watching Master Harold with considerable interest.

"There is nothing remarkable; they're trying to humbug us, that is all," said his nephew.

"Bet you five to one," retorted the boy, sharply.

"Done. Who is to hold the stakes?"

"He may," agreed Master Harold, pointing to Mr. Pryor, "and he shall be umpire." And with that the lad pulled out five shillings, and placed them in Mr. Pryor's hand.

Mr. Gyton laughed till he almost fell off the coach, while he laid down his stake.

"Now go ahead," he said; "what is there so remarkable about Pharaoh's lean kine?"

"Why, there are four horses—you see them; and here is Billy Doyle who drives them—you see him; and the five have only one eye among them, and that is Billy's. Did you ever see anything like that in England?—did you now?"

"Fairly beaten, Frank," said his uncle.

"Done, by Jupiter!" exclaimed the young man about town. "Here, sir, take your money."

"Give it to Bill—I don't want it," said the lad, contemptuously; and he folded his hands tightly together, and looked away towards the "Twelve Pins" with as lordly an expression as

though he owned them and the hundred lakes he had spoken of into the bargain.

"But they can't go," began Mr. Gyton, who considered Master Harold far too good fun to be left in peace. "Poor things! they seem as if they hadn't one leg among them—as if they were lame as well as blind. They are tired already. Do you call such animals horses in this part of the country?"

"If I was sitting where you are," retorted the lad, "I would show you whether they could go or not."

"Perhaps you will take the box seat," suggested Mr. Gyton, with a delighted chuckle.

"I will if you'll let me."

"Don't, Frank, do not," entreated Mr. Pryor. "You are carrying the joke too far," he added, in a lower tone; "you do not understand the Irish. Remain where you are."

But Mr. Gyton would not take his uncle's advice. They were at the very foot of a hill which rose up before them steep and straight like the wall of a house. "I mean to walk up here," he said, "and if you like at the top to take my place and the ribbons, you are welcome to both."

"I did not see you offer to drive," remarked the boy. "Are you not used to it?"

"Not to driving such cattle as the creatures you call horses. A good English thoroughbred now, or something of that kind."

"Oh, indeed!" said Harold, and they walked on in silence.

"Coachman, I say, coachman," exclaimed Mr. Gyton, when they reached the top of the hill, "this young gentleman is going to take my place and the reins, and means to break all our necks. Keep your one eye on him."

"I won't need, sir. Master Harold is as good a whip as ye'd find betwixt this and the Shannon; ay, and faith an' there's not a leap a horse could take that it's himself couldn't go over with him."

"I'd like to see him on the back of an English hunter," laughed Mr. Gyton.

"And damn me if I would not like to put *you* on the back of my father's chestnut Madcap; you'd be precious soon off, I'm thinking," Harold turned round to answer.

"Take care, Frank, take care," urged Mr. Pryor, but his nephew was incorrigible.

"Is the chestnut anything like our blind team, which you are driving so beautifully?" he asked.

"No, she is not; but our team could go faster than perhaps you would like to travel," retorted the boy.

"Try me," was the reply.

"Don't, for Heaven's sake!" entreated Mr. Pryor; but, before the words were well out of his lips, Harold had knotted up the reins, flung them on the horses' necks, and, with an hoorah and a whoop, lashed them forward down the hill.

"Now for Hell or Duranmore," gasped the coachman, while the insides screamed, and every outside passenger held on for his life.

"Can Irish horses go now?" hissed out the boy, turning round to his tormentor, as the coach went swaying and rocking down the hill.

Every moment the pace increased. Doyle seized the whip, but he could not stop Harold shouting and hallooing, and as the horses felt the vehicle gaining on them they galloped, blind though they were, faster and faster still.

The collars tightened, and the haime chains were strained to their utmost, as the creatures drew further away from one another in their frantic endeavours to get loose.

From side to side—bumping, tossing, rolling—the coach went flying down the incline. If one of the horses had fallen it would have been all over with the passengers; but hot iron had never touched the hoofs of those four blind steeds, and they were sure-footed as goats.

Down the hill they went; the mountains seemed to be spinning along with them. Duranmore and the Bay were now up, now down—now in the depths of the earth, now on the top of Eversbeg Head—but at last the level was safely reached, and the bays, after galloping along for a while, stopped of their own accord.

"It's not your fault, Master Harold, that there's one of us left alive. If the craythurs had not been blind it is hard to say when we would have pulled up," remarked Doyle, as he descended from his perch and unfastened the reins, and soothed and patted the frightened and panting animals, that stood with their nostrils quivering, with their flanks white with foam.

"Is it your misfortune, Bill?" asked the lad, swinging himself to the ground. "I'll send for the kit;" and then he looked coolly up to Mr. Gyton, and hoped he had enjoyed his drive. "It was not the distance, I suppose, so much as the pace?" he

suggested, and lifting his cap to the two gentlemen, he turned along the road leading towards Kincorth.

"Who is that—that lunatic?" asked Mr. Gyton, when the coachman resumed his seat on the box.

"That, sir," answered the man, whose cheeks and nose were blanched as white as though whiskey had never reddened them, "is Masther Harold Drewitt; and I am free to say that a bigger divil niver run."

"Any relation to Mr. Drewitt, of Kincorth?" inquired Mr. Pryor.

"His youngest son," was the reply; and uncle and nephew exchanged glances.

"They sent him to school to quiet him down a bit; but faith I think he's come back worse than he went."

"Send a goose to Dover, and a goose will come over," remarked Mr. Gyton.

"A goose!" repeated the coachman. "It's not much of a goose there is about Masther Harold. It's more of the cloven foot than the web that's inside his boots; an' it's a pity, for a kinder-hearted, more spirity, freer-spoken young gentleman there's not in Connemara. But they tell me it's the mother has spoiled him entirely; an' a nice

lady she is, too, and homely-like in her ways, for a foreigner."

"Foreigner!" echoed Mr. Pryor, in surprise.

"Well, English then, like yourself, sir; shure it's all one. The masther married her in London, I think it was—and well spoken of she is by rich and poor. Only they do say it's she spoils Masther Harold: though some think he would not have been so wild a divil if he had not been so much at the Headlands: that's his cousin's place, sir, Mr. Maxwell Drewitt, and a clever gintleman he is. He's made a sight of money, and gives plenty of employment."

"We are going to the Headlands," remarked Mr. Gyton, demurely.

"See that now!—well, as I was saying, you are going to see a clever gintleman. What he has in his head nobody would credit; and as for land, I could not tell all he bought up in the Estates Court. All that fine farm, that lies down in the hollow after we passed Calgillan, is his; and he has a great property, they tell me, beyond Cragantlet; that is behind the hill there facing you: and then he has the place that used to be Mr. Munks', on the other side of Laddenwell Lake; and never

chick nor child to leave all to. Many a time I think about that when I see the childer swarming in and out of the cottages of his labourers. They say he'd give Cherryfield, the place he bought from Mr. Munks, to have a son. It seems queer, sir, the way them things go. I suppose it's by favour, like kisses."

"It will be a deucedly lucky thing for that boy if he never have any children," observed Mr. Gyton, thoughtfully.

"So Mr. Drewitt thinks, people do say," answered the driver. "Maybe, gentlemen," he went on after a pause, "ye wouldn't mind saying nothing to Mr. Maxwell about Masther Harold's tricks. It might get him into thrubble. An' the lad intended no harm; it's just divilment and contrariness."

"Oh, we will do the young fellow no harm," said Mr. Gyton, "though, as you remarked, it was not his fault that our necks were not broken; and if you take my advice you will not trust him with the ribbons again. What *are* you considering, uncle?" he added. "You look as grave as if you had been retained for a bad case and got an adverse verdict."

"I was thinking about that Master Harold,"

replied Mr. Pryor, who had neither wife nor child himself. "I was thinking about that Master Harold. He is the very image of what Maxwell Drewitt was twenty years ago, though there is not much resemblance now."

"They tell me Mr. Maxwell never favoured him, sir," dissented the driver; "that there's a kindly look in Master Harold's eyes, and a soft winning way with him, that nobody ever remembered in Mr. Maxwell; but I ask your pardon, sir, for making so free, and Mr. Maxwell a friend of your own too."

"I have only seen him twice in the last twenty years," replied Mr. Pryor, "but I can remember very well what he was the first day we ever met, and that boy is like him. I could not think who he reminded me of all the way. Of course," he added, speaking to his nephew, "Maxwell Drewitt was a man when I first saw him, somewhere about my own age at that time, and this Harold is but a boy; still, the turn of the head, the tone of the voice, the features, and something in the expression, are the same. How it carries one back!" he finished, with a sigh; "how it carries one back! But here we are at Duranmore, and there is Mr. Maxwell Drewitt himself."

"Welcome once more to Connemara," said that gentleman, shaking Mr. Pryor's hand as though he wanted to shake it off. "See to the luggage, Dickson," he added, turning to his servant, and then he asked his guests which they would choose —to walk or drive.

"Walk, if you please," answered Mr. Gyton. "I shall be glad to stretch my legs after so much coaching."

"And you?" inquired Maxwell, turning to Mr. Pryor, with a smile at the younger man's lead.

"Should like the walk also," laughed Mr. Pryor. "Do you remember all the walks we had along the bay, twenty years ago?"

"Twenty years this month," answered Maxwell Drewitt. "They have not been long in passing." And the trio sauntered down the street together, while Doyle said to Dickson—

"Whose's them gentlemen, Barney, do ye know?"

"One of them is some Mr. Pryor," said Dickson, "that stood for Duranmore the time of the great election."

"You don't mane that?"

"Do you think I'm a liar then?" asked Dickson,

who was of a taciturn disposition and easily annoyed.

"I don't think much of the young chap, but if that's Mr. Pryor, I wish I was dhriving him ivery day, and was getting his blissing in silver too."

"Ay, faith, I believe ye. That's the only blissing or crossing aither you ever thrubble yerself about."

Which remark being disagreeably true, caused Mr. Doyle to retire into the "Marsden Arms," where he wet Mr. Pryor's gift with whiskey immediately.

Meanwhile Harold, after parting with his travelling companions, proceeded along the road which led round the north side of Duranmore Bay, and wended his way towards home—now running, now loitering, now pegging stones at the birds in the trees by the wayside, now cutting a stick, now decapitating the dandelions and benweeds, which were plentiful and in splendid bloom. He was full of life and youth and strength and spirit. He did not seem to know what to do with himself for very happiness, and so he would jump backwards and forward over the ditches and swing himself up to the first branch of a tree, and then

drop lightly to the ground, in order to let off the superfluous steam.

A fine lad truly—straight and tall and well-made—with black hair, dark eyes, white teeth, good features, and a fine open expression of face. He was like Maxwell Drewitt, and yet he was unlike. He had Maxwell's figure and Maxwell's face, but he had not Maxwell's impassiveness of muscle, his command of countenance, his steely self-possession.

A fine lad—one whom his mother idolised and his father adored. No other autocrat had come to reign after him; and the love and thought and devotion bestowed on Harold as a baby were bestowed on Harold likewise when he was a boy.

Brother and sister and servants were all alike—all yielded their wills to Harold. It was an understood thing in the household that Master Harold could think no wrong, that Master Harold was not to be crossed, that whatever Master Harold desired was to be done for him immediately.

Brian had for so long a time given place to Harold that no person remembered the time when Brian was anybody. The eldest born was to have

Kincorth, and the younger was to reign over all hearts in consequence. No one ever seemed to think such an arrangement harsh or unjust until the boys grew up, but then people began to remark that Mrs. Drewitt's entreaty—

"Do, Brian. Now cannot you let him have it? remember he is the youngest," was heard too often for much good to come of such training.

The best horse in the stable, the best fishing-rod, the best gun, had to be relinquished in Harold's favour without a murmur; and, perhaps, I cannot say more in praise of Brian Drewitt than that he never murmured at this favouritism; that he accepted his lower seat without a word.

At the gate of Kincorth the brothers ran up against each other.

"I was coming to meet you, Haro," said Brian, passing his arm through his brother's. "I meant to have been at the cross-roads in good time. Is the coach early, or am I late?"

"Both, I should say," answered Harold. "The coach was early, for I drove; and you are late, for some reason best known to yourself."

"I had to fetch Doctor Sheen to see papa," was the reply. "He's often ill now. I sometimes

think Sheen does not know what is the matter with him."

"Sheen is a fool!" remarked Master Harold. "Why don't you have old Barnes? But doctors are no use, are they now?"

"I don't know," sighed Brian; "but I wish somebody would do him some good."

"What ails him?" asked Harold; "is it the same old pain?"

"I believe so," answered Brian, and the pair walked on a little way in silence.

"I tell you what," at last broke out the younger brother; "if I were mamma I'd take him to Dublin; I would not stand Sheen's duffing about any longer. The fellows there could soon find out all about him, and he'd be ready for the hunting if they set him up at once."

"Harold——"

"Yes, Brian."

"Sometimes I am afraid that nothing will set him up.",

"Do you mean, you think he is going to die?" Harold asked, with a gradual crescendo.

"I hope not—but——"

"You are as bad as old Sheen," retorted Harold.

"Die—why should he die? he is ten years younger than Sheen himself, and he's twenty years younger than old Mrs. Waller—Waller's grandmother I mean. Why you might as well talk about you or me dying as of him."

"Don't say anything to mamma."

"*I* would be ashamed to repeat such folly," answered Harold, with a swagger; "but I shall tell her to take him to Dublin, and to have done with Sheen."

"I wish she could. She was wishing herself she had money to pay some eminent physician for coming down."

"Money—there you go again—money! It is all nonsense our being short of money. Haven't we this, and haven't we that, and haven't we hundreds and thousands and millions of acres beside?" asked Harold.

"What is the use of acres if they are all mortgaged?" demanded Brian. "What is the use of land if we can make nothing out of it?"

"I declare, Brian, if you go on like that I will turn straight back to school; you are the most confounded old croak I ever heard; and I have got such a lark I want to tell you about. I galloped

the horses down Calgillan Pass, and nearly frightened the wits out of two English fellows, who thought Doyle's team had no blood in them. They shouted for me to stop: the younger fellow prayed and cursed alternately: the insides were screeching like pigs a-killing. Old Doyle could not get the reins, for I had pitched them on the horses' necks, and I gave it to them with the whip as long as he left it with me. Didn't I, just? and didn't they go? We came down the hill with never a drag on, at the rate of about forty miles an hour; and then I hoped they had enjoyed their drive. Serve them right!—teach them to abuse Ireland again."

"You'll get your neck broken some day to a certainty, Harold," said Brian, gravely.

"Well, it can only be broken once, that is a comfort," answered Harold.

"And did the harness hold?—did no accident happen?"

"Devil an accident."

"What did Doyle say?"

"He was frightened to death—thought we were all going to hell, I believe—old humbug! He was trembling for his half-crowns I suspect. I hope

they won't give him a halfpenny! Shall I tell mamma? Yes, I will, for it would put her all of a shake. No, I won't, because she would send word to Doyle never to let me drive again. There she is at the hall-door waiting for us;" and both sons started off to reach her.

"Beaten, Brian," said Harold, disengaging himself from his mother's arms, and wiping her kisses away with his coat-sleeve. He could not bear her to kiss him. He did not think it looked manly; he was afraid of anybody calling him a "Molly Coddle," and he considered the correct thing would have been for Mrs. Drewitt to shake hands with him and say, "How are you, Harold?" instead of "hugging and kissing," as the young gentleman put it.

A natural enough sentiment for his age and disposition; and yet, do not be quite so energetic about the matter, Harold. Let the twining arms hold you, and the loving kisses remain, for those arms cannot clasp you always—those kisses cannot be given twice.

There is no need to be ashamed of a mother's love, boy; no need to wonder if any one be looking at that clinging paroxysm of affection.

Do not turn your eyes from her to see if the

servants have beheld your meeting; for you will never find another on the wide earth to love you like her. No one hereafter will lie awake at nights wondering how it is faring with you: no one will ever think of you in the days to come as she does now: no one in that vague future stretching away before you will ever feel her entire world bound up and centered in you.

Do not thrust her love aside, boy; you will stand in grievous want of it yet: do not wipe her kisses off your lips; the day is coming when you will lay your head on her breast and pray for another—and another yet.

Her love may be foolish, but it is foolish only because she thinks too much of you.

As man is born of woman, so man in his bitterest extremity turns back to woman; and ere many years passed over, Harold asked to listen to no voice beside his mother's, to look in no other face save hers, to hold no hand except that which had so often caressed him in vain.

He found comfort in the love which was unselfish in its selfishness; he sought shelter in a heart he had well-nigh broken; while she, poor soul! while she——?

If Mrs. Drewitt loved him too much, she was punished; if she were unjust, justice was done; if she sowed the wind, she reaped the whirlwind; if she made an idol of him, he showed her his feet of clay; if she spoiled him, she repented her of it; if she mourned, the Lord God, in his own good time, brought consolation to her!

CHAPTER IV.

A LITTLE POLITICAL ECONOMY.

THE breakfast-room at Headlands faced the east, and from the large bay-window you could see, over the trees which grew down to the sea, Eversbeg Abbey and Eversbeg House, the mountains where the marble was quarried, and the Twelve Pins far away in the distance.

"Lovely! exquisite!—perfectly enchanting!" exclaimed Mr. Pryor, looking for the twentieth time away from his tea and toast, from his ham and eggs, to the view before him. "It is not reality, Mr. Drewitt; we must be in fairyland!"

"Never saw anything more charming put on the stage," capped Mr. Gyton; at which remark his host laughed a little scornfully.

"Frank and I do not generally agree in our

opinions," observed Mr. Pryor; "but on the present occasion I confess I think he is right. I never saw anything more charming on the stage nor in a picture, which is about the same thing. On the stage, as in a picture, the best part of a scene is given to us, and all the worst is excluded. What we get is perfect of its kind, without blemish, without spot; and this scene is perfect; we could wish nothing more, we could do with nothing less."

"An unconscious plagiarism from Moore," remarked Lady Emmeline from behind the tea-urn, with an engaging titter. She had had a pleasant life of it during the fifteen years of her second experiment in matrimony; but experience had not made her any more sensible.

"Indeed!" said Mr. Pryor; "I was not aware."

"Of course not—I am sure not," replied Lady Emmeline, who prided herself on the extent of her reading. "So few people know the little poem to which I refer. It begins"—and Mr. Drewitt's wife coughed affectedly and tapped with her fingers on the table-cloth, and said, "Oh dear! how does it begin? 'To kneel—' no; 'To keep—' no—how is this?—'To weep—' "

"To damn," suggested her husband, and Mr. Gyton grew quite red in the face with his efforts to keep from laughing.

"'To sigh, yet feel no pain,'" said Lady Emmeline, with a swan-like movement of her lean neck; "'to weep, yet scarce know why'—the lines I referred to are towards the end—

> "'To feel that we adore with such refined excess,
> That though the heart would burst with more, it could not live with less.'

"This is love," and Lady Emmeline shut her eyes and repeated the remainder of the poem to herself.

"Well, it may be," remarked Mr. Drewitt; "I confess I am no judge; but it sounds to me much more like folly. What is your opinion, Mr. Gyton?"

"Mine?" exclaimed that young gentleman. "I know nothing about it. The fact is, love is not in my way. Ask my uncle; he's a shocking flirt."

"Oh, fie!" said Lady Emmeline, looking immensely pleased for all that. "Defend yourself, Mr. Pryor, from such a frightful accusation."

"Conscious innocence ——" murmured Mr. Pryor.

"Needs no advocate," finished his nephew. "What a compliment to your clients!"

"I have come here, Frank, to forget my clients," answered the other. "Let me enjoy my holiday; let me imagine I am in Paradise without a serpent near me."

"If the garden of Eden had been in Ireland," said Lady Emmeline, "poor Eve would never have been beguiled into eating the apple."

"My experience of Eves would lead me to a different opinion," remarked Mr. Pryor. "I do not think the absence of serpents would have secured the safety of the fruit."

"How terribly ungallant!" observed his hostess.

"How terribly true!" added her husband.

"And besides," finished Mr. Gyton, "St. Patrick was not born for a few years after Eve's petty larceny."

"It is a sad thing," said Mr. Pryor, addressing his host, "that so fine a country should not be more prosperous. I cannot understand the reason why Ireland is so far behind England at the present day. You have soil, climate, labour, fuel, canals, navigable rivers. It is a perfect puzzle to me."

"You are wrong in some of your premises,"

answered Maxwell Drewitt; "we have not soil, nor climate, nor efficient labour. Of course a soil can be made, and bogs can be drained; but these things require capital, and Ireland has no capital. If we had your climate and your capital we could do anything."

"But there must be money in Ireland," Mr. Pryor persisted.

"There is money in the North, I suppose," answered Maxwell, indifferently; "though even there I should say great capitalists are almost unknown; and there may be a few pound-notes in Dublin; but, as a whole, there is no money in Ireland, for this reason—that all the money made in Ireland is spent out of it; that rents are not returned to the soil, but squandered in England and on the Continent. We never had many resident gentry, and there are fewer resident gentry now than ever. Since the famine, this part of the country, at any rate, has been like the Deserted Village. People have purchased in the Encumbered Estates Court who have never seen their properties, and are never likely to see them."

"Surely, however, the Encumbered Estates Court has done good?"

"I ought to say nothing against it, at any rate," answered Maxwell, with a smile, "for I have bought to great advantage in it."

"I am sure I thought at one time he was going to buy all Connaught," said Lady Emmeline, languidly.

"Things will be better now, though," remarked Mr. Pryor, after acknowledging Lady Emmeline's observation.

"Will they? What makes you think so?" asked his host.

"The famine must have taught the Irish not to depend on potatoes," interrupted Mr. Gyton.

"Would a murrain teach the English not to depend on beef and mutton?" demanded Mr. Drewitt.

"Certainly not; but beef and mutton are not potatoes, are they?"

"Potatoes were beef and mutton to the Irish," answered the owner of the Headlands.

"And, good heavens! how can you expect a country to prosper whose people are satisfied with that cursed root, as Cobbett called the potato?" asked Mr. Gyton.

"The people here are not at all averse to butchers' meat," Maxwell replied, coolly; "only

it is sometimes true philosophy to be satisfied with what one can get."

"*Quand on n'a pas*——" began Lady Emmeline, but her husband cut ruthlessly across her little observation.

"There is no man living," he went on, "can tell what the cause of Ireland's misery may be, or where the best remedy for that misery is to be found. I thought at one time I had got to the bottom of the matter. After twenty years' consideration I have arrived at the conclusion that I know nothing about it. Every fact in the country is contradicted by some other fact."

"But surely the reduction of the superabundant population——" began Mr. Pryor.

"My dear sir, as you came through the country, did you see any traces of there ever having been a superabundant population in Connemara?" broke in Mr. Drewitt. "I hear a great deal of talk about the blessings of the potato blight, and the good done by emigration, but I confess I cannot trace the blessing or see the good."

"Potatoes could not, however, be a desirable article to form the sole diet of an entire population," persisted Mr. Pryor.

"They were quite as good as yellow meal," retorted Maxwell Drewitt, "and a precious sight more palatable. I really should like to have some clear explanation of the benefits this blight has showered down upon us," he continued; "for, so far as I can see, it has only reduced our population a couple of millions and brought Indian corn to our doors. Is yellow meal beef and mutton? is yellow meal bread and butter? is Indian-meal porridge a richer diet than potatoes and salt?"

"But wages must be higher," argued Mr. Pryor.

"Possibly they may be a little," answered the other; "but certainly provisions are higher also. Potatoes are dearer, oaten meal is dearer, all the necessaries of life to the mass of the population are much dearer. It is not the potato blight or emigration that has, in my opinion, caused the slight rise in wages, but simply that money is not of the same value as formerly. No terrible calamity has fallen on the whole of England during the last few centuries, and yet an ox used to be sold for fewer shillings than it now fetches in pounds. I repeat what I said at first: plague, pestilence, and famine have done Ireland no good. What will do Ireland good remains yet to be seen."

"You have mounted him on his hobby now, Mr. Pryor," said Lady Emmeline, "and if you do not take him out he will not get down to-day;" which hint being sufficiently intelligible, Mr. Pryor asked his host to show him his improvements, and Mr. Gyton gladly accepted an invitation from Lady Emmeline to accompany her over to Kincorth.

Mr. Gyton thought her Ladyship "awful value," as he told Harold confidentially, while he considered her husband confoundedly slow.

"A demmed blue-book," was Mr. Gyton's irreverent conclusion; "a perfect table of confounded statistics." And Harold laughed and vowed he would tell his cousin what Mr. Gyton said; while Mr. Gyton was inwardly thinking he had never seen, in all his life, a prettier girl than Geraldine Drewitt.

Meanwhile Mr. Pryor and Maxwell Drewitt walked by the shore, conversing as they loitered along.

"I should like to understand why this country cannot be made to prosper," repeated Mr. Pryor, pausing at last and looking with thoughtful eyes across the bay. "We in England imagined Ireland's difficulties were over; but now, when I

come back here, I see no change. I see the same dress, the same wretched cabins, the same dunghills, the same weeds. Excepting your place, I see no improvement anywhere. Tell me what your idea is of the matter? as a thinking man you must have formed some opinion on the subject."

"I have not," was Maxwell's reply. "I am as far at sea as ever. If you told me that unless I could give a clear account of the cause of Ireland's misery, and suggest some means of bettering her condition, I should be hung to-morrow morning—I must either string together a parcel of lies, or go to the gallows. I know no more than an infant where the evil lies, though I know where it does not lie. Ireland has nothing to complain of from England now. The English helped us nobly though the famine, though only about a quarter of that help reached the poor. We are fairly taxed, fairly governed. The unprosperous man never likes the prosperous. If Ireland does not like England, it is only because England is the rich lady, and Ireland the poor. Grievances are all rubbish: very well on the hustings, perhaps, or in a newspaper leader, but absurd when one talks sober, sorrowful earnest. I am sorry to see my

country limping along, but I cannot see where the shoe pinches for all that."

"You are satisfied, then, the population was not excessive?"

"It was not excessive for the country, though it probably is still excessive for the capital in the country. A dozen servants may not be too much for one house; but if there be no money to feed and pay them, what then?"

"That is precisely what political economists say!"

"I beg your pardon, political economists say there were too many people for the soil. You have only to use your eyes to see that view is erroneous, at any rate. The population of London, which is about half that of the whole of Ireland, is not too great for London, because you can employ your population and pay them. Here we could employ our population, but not pay them. Do you see what I mean?"

"Yes, you want capital; but if capital comes to Ireland, you shoot its bodily representative."

"I have not been shot."

"But you are Irish, and you are popular."

"No," said Maxwell Drewitt, slowly. "No, I am not popular, but I have been cautious. I loved

my life, and I took care of it. I have tried to be just. I have made no distinction between Catholic and Protestant. I have never evicted a tenant. I have given employment. I have assisted the poor. I have fed the starving. And yet," he added, "I am not popular. Explain it how you will."

Mr. Pryor thought about what the coachman had said, but wisely held his peace.

"There is my uncle," proceeded Maxwell, "who has mortgaged and wasted, beggared his tenantry and himself, ruined his tradespeople and encouraged pauperism, been a furious bigot and an intolerant Tory. He is liked better than I am. People would rather run a mile for a word from him than go across the street for a shilling from me. I cannot be blind, Mr. Pryor; these are the facts which puzzle me about Ireland—which I shall go to my grave and never understand."

"How is your uncle?" asked Mr. Pryor.

"But middling," was the reply. "Middling in mind, body, and estate. As for the latter, it is going to the dogs. Nothing can save Kincorth. If he lives long enough he will have to leave it, and God help the man who has it after him."

"Why?" inquired Mr. Pryor.

"Because an angel from heaven would not give satisfaction there now. If you bring a new mistress home to a disorderly household, what is the consequence? That the household hates the new mistress who wishes to put things to rights a little. For the same reason, Kincorth would hate a new master."

"But tenants are surely not like servants? They stand in a different position to their landlord to what a servant does to his master, and a good landlord must be felt by them to be a blessing."

"True—but there you come round the screw in the Irish character: they like to be benefited, it is true, but they must be benefited in their own way. They love to have their rents remitted, rents lowered; but they cannot endure a man who wants them to improve their land and take more out of it; who wishes them to help him and themselves at the same time. I have made my money, not by my tenants, but by my labourers. There is not a man who pays me rent that has bettered himself or me to the value of sixpence. If I had to begin again I would not buy an estate that had tenants on it; because if you evict them you are likely to get a bullet through your head, and if you let

them stay it is endless worry and trouble. Besides, there is a something very shocking—look at the matter how you will—in sending a whole colony adrift. A man used to a farm of his own will not become a labourer; and over and above that, the Irish attachment for place is strong to a degree inconceivable to an English mind. If you took a small house from an Englishman and gave him a better he would be contented I suppose?"

"He would be a great idiot if he were not," answered Mr. Pryor.

"Well, an Irishman would not be contented. Where he is planted he grows: he is like a cat; he loves the walls he has been accustomed to. If you take the roof off he will still kindle his fire on the old hearthstone, and sit there with nothing but the sky above him, cursing the men who have, as he calls it, brought him and his 'to the world.'"

"But what are people to do?"

"Let the tenants stay, as I have done; or, better still, buy the waste land and reclaim it. I would turn no man out in this country, because it is better for him to live poorly off his own labour rather than live poorly by begging. The thing is

this—if you turn a man out he will not work, and he will neither let you or anybody else till his land; therefore the land is useless, and he is a burden. That is the state of the country at present; but if capital were introduced into Ireland, if our waste ground were ploughed, if our cattle were properly fattened, if the people were taught to eat beef and mutton, if they could be made to love luxury, if they could be induced to wear shoes and stockings, and to live in any house better than a pig-stye—if, in one word, they could be civilised, I think in another hundred years things might be better. I only think, remember, because Ireland is a hopeless problem to me at present. Had I had English tenants to deal with, had I had to work with any class of human beings that wanted to rise in the world, I could have money in handfuls. I declare to you, Mr. Pryor, I could."

"As it is you have not done amiss, I think," said the other.

"I have done nothing to what I might have done," was the reply; "nothing. I might have owned the whole tract of country that lies between here and Bennebeola. Land was to be had in this neighbourhood at one time almost

for the asking; and if I could have got hands to farm it, and a market for my produce, I should have been as rich as Rothschild. With me it was not the want of capital so much as the want of immediate return for capital and the perfect impossibility of obtaining labour. Even starvation could not induce men who had owned little patches of land to do a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. They tired of it; tired of having my bailiffs after them, of being compelled to turn up the ground in earnest. My ways were contrary to their ways, my determination to their prejudices. They could not bear improvement: they saw in it just what the North American Indians saw in civilisation, the downfall of their dynasty of dirt, laziness, and letting things alone."

"And so you had to give up."

"So I had to draw in my hand. I had stretched my arm out further almost than I could draw it back; and I do not mind telling you that there was a time when, what with poor's rates and beggars, and capital bringing back no return, I was almost ruined. Look here, Mr. Pryor," he added; "at that very time I could have found work for every

able-bodied man in this part of the country. I could not get labourers enough. It was then I tried Ireland: then all my old ideas were overset: then I *began* to understand that the English were right about us—'that the fault was in ourselves.'"

"And you think so still?"

"I do. I cannot tell you where the fault lies, or what the fault is, but it is in us. I have heard Englishmen talking about friends of theirs—capital fellows, honest, clever, and so forth, who yet could not get on, and wondering what the reason might be. Well, Ireland is as great an enigma; she cannot get on. If her sons and daughters go to England or America they can push their way up, but they will not push here. We are alike in all ranks. There is my uncle at Kincorth, and there is his poorest tenant: they cling together, and love one another, because their ways are the same, their ideas are identical. They are both thoroughly Irish: they do not see the use of 'taking so much trouble,' of 'being so particular.' What their ancestors did is surely good enough for them; and so where the rushes grew a hundred years ago, they are growing still: where the dungheap was piled in their grand-

father's time, it stands fouling the air to this present day."

"But you have done so much! I cannot understand *your* talking in this manner."

"I have done much; but mark you, if I were dead to-morrow, and an Irish gentleman took this place, in twelve months' time the lawn would be turned into grazing, and the weeds would be growing beside the drive. I go to England and I see velvet lawns, and clean, well-rolled walks. I come back here and I pay a visit to any house in the neighbourhood—to Lord Marsden's, or your cousin's, or any gentleman's residence—and up to their very hall-doors the grass is half-a-foot long, and the gravel cuts my boots, and the weeds grow lank and luxuriant. If the gentry kept their places in the same order as the English, our labourers would find employment about our gardens and pleasure-grounds alone. But we are all alike," finished Maxwell, bitterly; "all—all alike."

"You are all alike in one thing, at any rate," answered Mr. Pryor; "in your detestation of trade: you do not consider buying and selling cattle and farm produce trading; but you hate mills, factories, shopkeepers, and merchants."

"Till they are rich enough," replied Maxwell; "wherein I think we only follow your English lead. You do not recognize traders as equals till they are millionaires."

"Fairly hit," laughed his guest.

"And as the Irish think more of caste than of comfort, they would rather, as a rule, live on a little, and be gentlemen, than earn much, and sink in the social scale."

"But as money goes on depreciating in value; as small incomes, I mean, buy less and less each year; as birth becomes of less importance, and money, and what money can buy—education—of more, that prejudice will vanish."

"It may—but it will take a long time first," was the answer.

"To me," went on Mr. Pryor, "love of pleasure and indifference to luxuries seem the curse of the country. To do as little work, to live on as little money as possible, appears to be the aim and object of every man, woman, and child I meet. It makes it a pleasant country to travel in; but I should not care to live in it all the year round."

"Do you remember," asked Maxwell, with a cold smile, "how you were going to right all

shrubs grew luxuriantly, the flowers were bright under the summer sky; the house itself looked gay and cheerful, with every window reflecting back the afternoon sunshine, and Maxwell Drewitt, as he walked up the ascent, felt already the pride of a possessor, and pointed out the beauties of Kincorth with a certain triumph which was intelligible enough, and sad enough, to Geoffry Pryor.

"You will be merciful, I hope," he said in a low tone aside to Maxwell Drewitt, "in the hour of your strength."

"Have I not said?" was the reply, and they all passed on together.

In an arm-chair placed on the lawn before the house, an old grey-haired man was seated so busily engaged in reading the newspaper that he took no heed of the approaching strangers.

"Is that your uncle, Mr. Drewitt?" inquired Mr. Pryor. "Can that be he?"

"That is he," Maxwell answered. "Twenty years have done their work with him, have they not?"

Had they not indeed? Feeble, bent, emaciated, but still with the same old grace of manner, with

about ten thousand people will flock: you had best not meddle with that."

"Anything else?" inquired Mr. Pryor.

"Well, yes; there are a number of fishermen living under Durrow Cliff who claim the sea-weed as theirs: it would not be wise for you to have any dispute with them.'

"What more?"

"There is a right of way across what is called the ten-acre field, and the inhabitants of Durrow village take their donkeys through the grounds at all hours of the day and night."

"Any other advantages?"

"Durrow Cliff is full of caves: you must never explore them; and should you hear suspicious sounds round the coast in the calmest night, you must conclude it is the Atlantic breaking on the rocks. If you are wise, you will be kept in brandy free. Many a keg is left outside the dining-room window at the Headlands; and as for potheen, I know a place up among the hills where some of the natives gather mountain dew in such quantities that I could almost set up a public-house with the presents that find their way to me. The constabulary officer sometimes says my whiskey tastes wonderfully

like potheen; but I always assure them it is sent to me by a friend in the North.

"'Bushmills?' suggests Captain Ford, mixing himself another tumbler.

"'Somewhere thereabouts,' I answer; and between us we empty the decanter. There is a still on the Durrow property, and if you see any smoke rising without apparent reason, you had better attribute it to a volcano."

"Have you exhausted your catalogue of drawbacks?"

"No," replied Maxwell; "there was a fellow ejected by the late proprietor, who has vowed to burn the house down over the head of the first man who gets his lot."

"What do you mean by a lot?" interrupted Mr. Pryor.

"A lot," answered Maxwell, "is so much land let by the piece instead of by the acre; perhaps a tract of waste ground containing one hundred acres of morass, rock, granite and brambles, will let for, say five pounds a year. Molloy's case was a hard one, if his story is to be believed. Three years running he reared three pigs to pay his rent, and three years running his pigs died; only one out of

the nine lived to be killed, and the price of that one he offered to Mr. Carford, who refused to take it.

"'All or none,' he said, and Molloy was ejected. Now, if you buy Durrow, take my advice and give Molloy back his house. He is living there on the hearthstone, like hundreds of others in Ireland. Roof his house for him, and give him a potato-garden, and an acre or two of common land for his pigs to run over."

"But would not that look as if I were afraid?"

"If you had turned him out it would; as you did not turn him out, it will only make things pleasant for your agent."

"On the whole, I think I shall not care about buying Durrow. I tell you a place I should like, if it were in the market—Kincorth."

Maxwell's face changed.

"Kincorth will not be for sale, I fancy," he remarked.

"I thought you said Mr. Drewitt would have to leave it?"

"So he will; but the mortgagees are likely to take possession."

Then he is mortgaged?"

"Mortgaged?" repeated Maxwell. "Swamped would be a better word, Mr. Pryor. He has never paid a shilling of interest these four years, and there were arrears then."

"The place could not have been mortgaged for anything like its value," remarked the other.

"I believe it was not, in the first instance," answered Maxwell; and Mr. Pryor looked him straight in the face.

"I suppose I must not guess who will ultimately take possession of Kincorth," said Mr. Pryor, a little significantly.

"You can if you like," answered Maxwell. "Most probably I shall. I bought up the mortgages long ago."

"It is a pity!" exclaimed the other, "for your uncle was a thorough gentleman, and his wife a charming creature."

"Of course, if I am obliged to foreclose, I shall not require them to leave Kincorth," said Maxwell, loftily.

"You will do the same by them as you have done by your other tenants, I suppose," remarked Mr. Pryor.

"If they allow me," was the reply; and the

two walked on for a minute or two in silence, while Mr. Pryor thought that perhaps none of the tenants had found Mr. Maxwell Drewitt very pleasant to deal with, spite of his worldly wisdom.

"You will, I am sure, consider our conversation as confidential," said Maxwell, after a pause.

"Most assuredly. I have no right to speak about your business at all."

"Not that it matters much," thought Maxwell, "for the pear is nearly ripe."

walked down the drive, talking to Mr. Pryor as he went.

As a matter of habit he felt the horses' girths, as a matter of habit also he patted the horses' necks, as a matter of courtesy he waited till each man was in his saddle, till Harold had joined the party and was expatiating in the most boastful manner concerning the fine points of the young mare he was riding; then Brian laid his hand on Maxwell's rein and detained him for a moment.

"Well, Master Brian, and what can I do for you?" asked Maxwell, with a sneer.

"I want to know, sir," and Brian's hold of the rein grew tighter; "I want to know how you dare speak to my mother as you do."

"You are ruffling up your feathers early, young gentleman," retorted his cousin.

"Birds who have feathers have sometimes also spurs," was the reply.

"When a bird's spurs are too sharp to serve our purpose, we cut them," answered Maxwell. "Let me pass, boy," he added, angrily. "Let me rejoin my guests."

"One second," said Brian; but Maxwell wrenched his hand off the bridle, and striking

miles, also; with no books, no newspapers, no society. And a bachelor, too," finished Mr. Gyton.

"That is his own fault, I suppose," remarked Maxwell Drewitt, "if it be a fault; but I should rather call it a virtue."

"Well said," cried Mr. Waller, who was terribly under the influence of petticoat government at home.

"For my part, I consider a bachelor one of the most enviable beings under the sun," went on Maxwell: "he can go as he likes, come as he likes. He is free as air, and yet knows that he can settle down whenever he pleases into husbandhood."

"It is not so easy to settle down—at least, not to find any one to settle down with at my age," answered Mr. Pryor.

"Why, you cannot be more than a year or two my senior; and if I were single to-morrow I could have my pick of a dozen—ay, and pretty girls, too."

"I wish you would introduce me to some of them," remarked Mr. Pryor.

"I am too much your friend," replied Maxwell; "far be it from me to lead you up to the trap and help you to snap the spring on yourself. Wedlock

is a padlock," added the owner of the Headlands. "Not that I ought to speak against it, for my marriage made me; and my wife never had a will of her own, so far as I heard of; but for an independent man to marry—for a man like yourself, for instance—it is folly."

"Drewitt is going to turn preacher, and expound the Gospel according to St. Paul," said Mr. Waller.

"I shall hold you up as an example of a sinner's end then," retorted Maxwell.

"Hang it, man, you need not be so confoundedly personal!" observed Mr. Waller, whose domestic discomforts were too well known for him to attempt concealment. "It is not everybody knows how to marry so well, or manage a wife so well when he is married, as yourself."

Maxwell looked away from his companions over the ocean, and a thought came across his mind that he had not married so very well after all.

He had given his youth—his liberty—all chances of happy love, for money; and now he could not get rid of his wife—could not get rid of that old, rouged, affected, ugly woman, who was jealous of every look he cast in the direction of those who

were younger and prettier than herself; who had no homely graces, no fireside virtues; whom he could not even love like a mother and value as a friend.

Forty-three and sixty — seventeen years on the wrong side. It was of this Maxwell thought while he stood in front of Durrow House, and looked over the Atlantic which lay like a lake below.

They were four fine-looking men. Maxwell was much the same in figure as when we first saw him, but his face was more set and hardened; the lines were deeper, the look in his eyes was darker. He was getting a little bald, that is, the once-luxuriant hair was thinner, more especially about his temples, and his whiskers were turning grey. He was the oldest-looking man of the party, though Mr. Pryor was a year his senior; but then Mr. Pryor's life had not been so hard a one, and his heart was younger too.

Mr. Pryor's face was one that his sister said "it rested her to look at," so calm, so trustworthy, so good. Maxwell Drewitt had lived twice as fast as this London barrister, and would be old twice as soon.

Some idea of this kind came into Mr. Waller's mind, apparently, for he said—

"I wish I looked as young as you do, Geoffry. I wish you could give me the secret of wearing so well and keeping so handsome:" at which remark Maxwell Drewitt turned round and laughed.

"I know what you are laughing at," went on Mr. Waller; "you are thinking that one must be handsome before one can keep handsome. That is the worst of being clever, Drewitt; it makes a man so devilishly sharp and disagreable: but, now, do look at Pryor; there was not so much difference between us twenty years ago, and yet——"

"There is all the difference now—is that what you would say?" asked Maxwell. "If it be, perhaps there has been all the difference in the twenty years too; in how the twenty years has been passed. You have drank hard, I have worked hard, while he has been addressing an attentive court or lounging in an easy-chair. It is the pace that kills, Waller, more than years."

"As for pace," muttered Mr. Waller, but a dangerous look in Maxwell's face stopped him.

"We can but live," said the latter, hastily; "if

we grow old soon, we have lived much, that is all any one can make of the question; and yet," he went on, "I think it must be a fine thing for a man in middle age to find himself free to begin the whole drama of existence over again. Free to settle, free to choose, free to reside in a great town; and yet, also, free to buy a place like this and keep it for a kind of dessert to the dinner of the year. You will buy it?" he added, turning to Mr. Pryor. "Can you resist?—can you look upon Durrow and yet flee from such temptation?"

"I cannot," answered Mr. Pryor: "spite of right of way, and private stills and smugglers, and evicted tenants, and holy wells, I must have Durrow."

"And we will get a jolly lot of fellows together, and come over and have such capital sport," finished Mr. Gyton, who had kept silence for an unusual time.

"Thank you, Frank, you are very kind," replied his uncle.

"And you might get my mother to matronize half-a-dozen girls; it would be such a lark," went on Mr. Gyton; "dancing and boating, and riding and driving."

"No fear of the rents of Durrow being spent off

the soil," said Mr. Pryor, "if Frank's programme were carried out. I should spend as much in a couple of months as Durrow would return in a year."

"First-rate for Connemara," answered Maxwell.

"I will write to my mother to-night," persisted Mr. Gyton, "and give her a description of Durrow. It is the very place she would delight in. Let me see, how can I describe it? Help my imagination, Mr. Drewitt."

"Your imagination!" repeated Maxwell; "gracious heaven! there is no imagination about the matter; it is all fact, from beginning to end. There are the rocks, and the Atlantic, and the islands; and Durrow stands, say a hundred feet above the sea, and the ground is level from the house to the very edge of the cliff, which goes sheer down to the shore. There are no trees to speak of, no shrubs, no fields; it is all rock and mountain, and bog and morass. It is a place to make your teeth chatter in the winter-time; but in the summer—you see for yourself, young gentleman, what it is like now."

"Cannot you buy the place at once, and let us all spend August here?" asked Mr. Gyton, with enthusiasm.

"I am afraid not," said Mr. Pryor, with a smile; "but I dare say I can have it all ready for your mother by the spring."

"And if you want a good fellow to manage your property and to reside in the house while you are away, let me recommend you a deserving man. His name is Connor; and he has been overseer at the marble quarries for sixteen or seventeen years past."

"What—Ryan's brother-in-law!" exclaimed Mr. Waller, with some surprise.

"Even so; do you know anything against Connor?" demanded Maxwell, facing sharp round on the last speaker.

"No; only you remember that you thought—that is—that Ryan himself——"

"Ryan himself is not Connor," interrupted Maxwell; "and Mrs. Connor is a very worthy person."

"And pretty too," added Mr. Waller, "though she is not so young as she used to be. By Gad! Geoffry, that was a girl! If she had been more thoroughbred she might have married a duke. Faith, I thought she stayed single so long waiting for some travelling prince to pick her up and carry

her off with him. She must have been thirty before she took on with Connor; eh Drewitt?"

"I am not the parish clerk, sir," answered Maxwell, hotly. "I do not keep a register of births in my head;" and with this civil speech the owner of the Headlands marched off to the edge of the cliff, where he flung himself down on the grass, and with one hand supporting his head, looked away and away over the sea across which white sails were glancing in the sunshine.

"What a damnable temper Drewitt has!" remarked Mr. Waller. "I am sure it is just wearing his body out," and the trio turned into the house and walked through the empty rooms, and looked at all possible views, from all possible windows, discussing furniture and papers, and carpets and window-curtains the while.

After a time Mr. Pryor made his escape, and rejoined his host, and the two lay on the grass, near the edge of the cliff, talking about Duranmore, and Kincorth and Durrow, and Ireland and England, for nearly an hour.

"There is another thing," said Maxwell, at last; "the last proprietor, Mr. Carford, was a Roman Catholic, and almost supported the priest of Durrow,

besides paying tithes. Will you follow suit? I know that to English ears such advice must sound absurd; but, after all, the few things I have mentioned will not amount to a hundred a-year, and you will have five hundred a-year back in comfort. You cannot civilize a country in a day. You must give savages beads, and rum, and looking-glasses if you take their land from them. They cannot understand the substance, so you must let them have the sham. I should like to come back to life in a hundred years time, say about 1950, and see Ireland then. Will there be butchers' shops in a place like Duranmore, where the poor people will buy scraps for their Sunday's dinner, as the Londoners do on Saturday night? Will yellow meal be a tradition, and the cup of tea an institution? Will the people wash themselves, and the women wear their flannel petticoats under their dresses instead of round their necks? Will the bare feet be covered? Will the children drop off their rags some night, and put on clean cotton frocks, like English children, when they get up in the morning? Will they comb their hair, and scrub their faces, and eat with a knife and fork? Will the men who drive the sheep into Ballinasloe fair ever

know by experience what number of joints there are in one? Will they ever have wooden floors? and if they have, will they keep them clean? I wonder, Mr. Pryor, I wonder! And yet," added Maxwell, "if that day ever do come, Ireland will be Ireland no longer, but only a more picturesque England—a Cumberland, in fact, across the channel."

"On the whole, perhaps, you would not care to come back after the hundred years," suggested Mr. Pryor.

"Yes, I should. I should like to have my land then, and to be able to sell it at the 1950 market price. A hundred years!—where shall we be then? where shall we be?"

"Certainly not on the top of Durrow Cliff, talking about Ireland," answered Mr. Pryor, gravely. There was something about the fierce tone of Maxwell's question which quivered through every nerve in his body.

"Is he afraid of death?" marvelled the barrister, and even while he was marvelling, Maxwell spoke again.

"I can remember," he said, "when I was a boy coming across here with my father, and walking over the very spot where we are now talking, hand

in hand with him. It was just such another day as this, warm and bright and clear; there were vessels coming and going; the sea was blue and calm; the fishermen were drying their nets in the sun. Well, the years have passed since then—passed like days. I have been lying here thinking how short a day life is after all, and wishing that we could endure through the centuries like the mountains, or the ocean yonder."

"It would be very sad if we could, I think," answered Mr. Pryor.

"Do you really mean what you say? But we are so differently constituted that one man's meat is literally another man's poison. To me it has always seemed that life is so short, while there is so much to be done in the world."

"Ay! but by successive gangs of labourers," replied Mr. Pryor.

"Shall we go?" asked Mr. Maxwell Drewitt, hastily springing to his feet. "Have you seen enough of Durrow? Shall we call at Kincorth as we return, and ask how my uncle is to-day?"

"I should like to call on Mr. Drewitt," said the other. "The last time I saw him he was lying on Doctor Sheen's bed, with his pretty young wife

a near cut across the hills from Kincorth to Durrow, "and for that reason I am quite in earnest concerning myself. I desire to get some employment; to be ready for the evil day when it comes."

"What makes you think an evil day is coming?" asked Mr. Pryor.

"There was a person told me," answered Brian. "Four years ago, Mr. Pryor, when I was only fifteen. I got a warning. I was told to learn diligently; to be on my guard against bad company; to keep my eyes open and my mouth shut; for that Maxwell Drewitt had made up his mind to own Kincorth, and that I should have to turn out and earn my bread some day. I am not going to tell you who warned me," added Brian; "but I took the advice. I have tried to learn. I have kept my eyes open, and I know Maxwell means to do us harm if he can."

"Why should he do you harm?"

"Why? Because, as he says, we have been idle while he has worked; because we have sat with our hands folded while he has been toiling and struggling; because my grandfather willed Kincorth away from the elder brother and left it to his younger son; because my father married and had children;

because he hates us," finished Brian Drewitt, "as I hate him."

Mr. Pryor turned and looked at the boy as he spoke these last words. There was a something more terrible than any passion could have been in the stern restraint of Brian's manner; in the strong curb he seemed to put on himself—on his words, on his gestures. There was no fury—no outbreak of rage—no outburst of violent indignation. He spoke of hate—sullenly, calmly—without a change of colour, without a variation in his voice.

"Why do you hate him?" inquired Mr. Pryor.

"Because I do. That is not a very civil answer, you will say, and yet it is the best I can give you. Why I hate him I feel; but I could not explain what I feel, except that I know he wants to grind me under his foot as I grind this gravel," and Brian stamped his heel upon the ground; "but he shall never have the chance, I swear."

"But for a young man of property——" argued Mr. Pryor.

"I am not a young man of property," the youth replied. "Have you really no idea how we are actually situated? Do not mention it to my mother, because she thinks that Kincorth is clear,

at any rate; but Kincorth is mortgaged, like everything else. We have not an acre of land that is not owned by strangers, and I am quite confident if anything were to happen to my father, and that the mortgagees sold the estates, Maxwell would buy them all, and then where should we be?"

"Where should you be whoever bought them?" asked his companion. "It would not matter whether he or Queen Victoria bought them so long as they were sold."

"No; only so far as this, that perhaps one could do something with other people, while one could not with him. For instance, I might be agent to anybody else, but I would not serve Maxwell. I wish, Mr. Pryor," added the boy, for though he looked so manly, he was but nineteen after all; "I do wish I had known you were going to buy Durrow, for I would have asked you to give me the agency until I saw how it was going to be with my poor father."

"I have promised it to Connor," said Mr. Pryor, regretfully.

"I know you have, and Maxwell recommended him to you. Mr. Waller told me that," went on Bryan; "but I should have suspected it anyhow,

for he knew I wanted something to do, and thought he would be beforehand with me; but I will make my way in spite of him, if he were ten times as rich as he is."

"May I ask you something, Brian; and will you answer my question honestly? Why is there such bad blood between you and your cousin?"

"I told you before I should never be able to make you understand," was the reply. "We have never had a quarrel, and yet we have never been friends. He does not treat my mother as I like. He is trying to take Harold from us, and he is a bad man—a bad, heartless man, without a conscience."

"How do you make out that he is a bad man? I knew him before you were born. He was poor then; but he has worked hard since, and earned great possessions. Is there any crime in that?"

"No; but there is harm in the way he has got rich. You do not like usurers in England. You do not like people who take advantage of their neighbours' necessities. Well, Maxwell is a usurer. He has got a 'backer,' I think you call it, in Liverpool or London, or some of those great towns, where you come from, who lets him have as much capital as he wants; and then when they make a

good hit they share the spoil. Maxwell got lots of properties into his hands that way during the famine. Gentlemen were hard up and wanted an advance; then he let the interest drop behind, and wanted principal, and interest, and compound interest, just in a day. He never bought Mr. Munks' place, nor that enormous estate he has in the Joyce county. He foreclosed on both, or rather his agent did it for him. He has a man who does all his dirty work cheap—a lawyer, called Ryan."

"Surely that is the name of Mrs. Connor's brother?"

"Yes, he is Mrs. Connor's brother; but that is nothing against either Connor or his wife, and you are safe enough in letting Maxwell's *protégé* have the agency; for even if his man were not honest, my cousin would try no tricks with *you*."

"Go on—what were you saying about Ryan?"

"He has Ryan under his thumb somehow, and can make him do just what he pleases. It appears that at one time they were great friends: that at the time when you stood for Duranmore——"

"I remember a young lawyer who was always with your cousin—a clever, artful dog I thought him. Is that the Ryan you are talking about?"

"The very same. Ryan had Mr. Waller's agency for a long time, until, in fact, he displeased Maxwell somehow or other, and then everything went wrong with him. He lost his agency and his clients, and finally went as clerk to a new attorney who came to Duranmore. Whatever happened then I cannot tell you; but he got into some trouble, either through drinking or want of money, which Maxwell saw him out of. From that time on, Ryan has been back in business on his own account, and is Maxwell's factotum."

"I am afraid, Brian," said Mr. Pryor, "that you are a sad gossip."

"If I am, it is only about one man," was the answer; "and sometimes I fancy," here the lad lowered his voice, "that it is really he who has got the mortgage over Kincorth, and if it be——"

"If it be—what then?" demanded Mr. Pryor.

"Why the place will not be ours even during my father's lifetime," finished Brian; "let alone afterwards."

"But supposing—even supposing he have lent money on the property, it would do him no good to turn you out; it surely would answer his purpose much better to let you all remain."

"As dependents on him! thank you, Mr. Pryor. No one belonging to me shall ever eat his bread, if I have any say in the matter."

"But would it not be wise to keep on good terms with him? Would it not be less galling to take an obligation from him than from a stranger? Your father provided for him. It would be a simple matter of justice if he were to provide for you."

"Ay; but my father had the property, remember, that ought to have belonged to Maxwell's father; that is the cause of all his ill-will towards us; and from what I can hear he had nothing but his keep out of the place, just as we have never had anything that with better management we ought to have had. He told my mother that he disliked her, not for herself, but for being the mother of the future owner of Kincorth. I can remember quite well, about ten years ago, Harold —he was a little fellow then—saying to him one day in a passion, 'Go home, go home, this is not your home,' and Maxwell made the remark, 'And it won't be yours either, my boy, when I come back.' No later than Friday last I spoke to him about letting Harold take that leap on Madcap, and he told me—I repeat his words, Mr. Pryor—

'to hold my blasted tongue, and not presume to speak to my betters.'"

"And you——"

"I am waiting, Mr. Pryor."

There was a long pause while they stood together on the top of the hill resting. Everything on earth and in heaven looked peaceful and serene. There were no clouds in the sky, there were no billows on the ocean. You would have thought that for very sympathy, the heart of man would in such a place have throbbed quietly through its allotted time, untroubled by jealousy, undisturbed by passion.

And yet here, of all places in which he had ever set his foot, it seemed to Mr. Pryor that men's passions were strongest—that their hate was fiercest. He had heard such stories of cruelty—of vengeance—of heartburnings—of envy—of unforgiveness, that had he not heard likewise histories of patience—of devotion—of constancy—of faithfulness—of endurance, and of love, he might have thought he was not on earth at all, but in hell; and now here, with the blue mountains looking calmly down upon them, with the great sea stretching away for thousands and thousands of miles at

their feet, with the beauties of nature all around, and a great silence, an intense stillness, pervading the scene, was this boy nursing up his wrath likewise against a coming day.

"I am waiting," and Brian's face never changed, his eye never dropped under Mr. Pryor's scrutiny.

"You are thinking," said the youth, when his companion's glance at last came back from the ocean and rested once again on his face, "that I am a fool; that if Maxwell does not do all I want him to do, it will be a short shrift and a long sleep with one or other of us; but you are mistaken. I would not hurt his body. I would not thrash him. I would not even put a bullet through him; but I would make him feel. There is an old epigram," he proceeded, "that I read lately and learned by heart, because it put me in mind of Maxwell. I wonder if you know it," and he repeated :—

"Death threw his dart at Bindon's heart,
But how was he astounded,
When from the part as with a start
The weapon quite rebounded:
'Ho! ho!' quoth Death, and drew his breath,
'My slaughtering arm you mock at;
But here's a blow shall lay you low,'
And smote him through the pocket."

"Then your idea is to injure him pecuniarily?"

"If he do not alter his manners to my mother; if he encourage Harold in drinking, gambling, and all kinds of folly, as he has done hitherto; and if he vents any more of his temper upon me—yes; because I know that Maxwell's only vulnerable point is money."

"Brian," began Mr. Pryor, and the lad looked surprised at the change in his companion's tone—"Brian, you are laying up great trouble for yourself. You are preparing an awful curse for your future days. You are nourishing a viper and hugging it to your breast: when it comes to life, it will bite you worse than it will ever bite him. Put all these thoughts and fancies out of your head, boy. At your age the cup should be sweet, not bitter. Whatever your cousin may have done—whatever he may be, it is not to you he will have to answer for his misdeeds; but you will have to answer for yours, Brian; and for sins, too, if you do not crush this hate out of your heart and turn, before it is too late."

"What can I do? What would you have me do?"

"I would have you go on your way, and not ever cast your eyes on his——"

"But he will not let me go on my own way. Look here," and Brian pulled a couple of letters out of his pocket. "There is an old Quaker who has been very good to my father. I thought I would write and ask his advice, and tell him I wanted to work, as the properties were so much involved; and that if he could find anything to do I would work hard and try to be worth my salary. Here is his first letter. You see how kind—how encouraging. Here is his second. Just time enough between, you perceive, for him to write to Maxwell and get back his answer. You will say I do not know he wrote to Maxwell or that my cousin said anything about me; but I am as sure his fingers have spoiled my pie as that I am living."

"You did not reply to the first letter."

"No. I was waiting to see how my father would be after that last attack."

"It seems strange," remarked Mr. Pryor.

"No, it does not seem strange to a person who knows Maxwell as I do," and Brian folded up the letters again, and put them back in his pocket.

"What makes you want so much to get to England?" asked the barrister, after a pause.

"Because there is no way in which a man can make money here."

"Your cousin has made money here. Why not have a turn at some of your waste lands, and do as well as he has done?"

"He never would have done so well but for his wife; and I would not marry an old woman. No, not if she was hung with diamonds. Besides, it is not often Connemara sees an heiress, even if I were inclined to try my luck."

"But supposing, now, Kincorth were your own, could you not make a living out of it?"

"If it were clear of debt?"

"No. Suppose it were mortgaged to close upon its present value, could you do no better for yourself than your father has done?"

"I would make a try to do better anyhow."

"Would you work? Would you put your shoulder to the wheel, and cut down the expenses, and be brave, as your cousin was, disregarding appearances?"

"Whatever a man could do, that I would do," was the answer.

"But you are not a man yet," said Mr. Pryor, with a smile.

"Am I not? I wonder when I shall be one then," was the reply.

Mr. Pryor stood still — he was looking back through the years and trying to remember what he was at Brian's age in the days before he came over in compliance with the wishes of a certain very wealthy and influential relative to contest Duranmore.

He had not a care in the world at nineteen. Life was to him fairyland—to be young was to be happy. He had never had a sorrow in his life, save about his lessons at school or his examinations at college. He could look back and see himself as he was then. He could look back at himself, as though at another person. He could see the lad with his fair hair—with his happy, frank face—with his little airs of dandyism—with his cheerfulness, his hopefulness, his *insouciance* — and contrasting that picture with this, his heart bled for this poor lad, to whom the cares of life had come so soon, on whose shoulders the burden of existence was pressing already so heavily—who had to think for father, mother, sister, brother, and be tender and careful for all.

Brian's face was still smooth as a girl's, but he

was a man for all that—and as a man, Mr. Pryor addressed him.

"My boy," he said, "I will talk to you now as if you were thirty-nine instead of nineteen. If you will do all you say, if you will be a good lad and give up the next ten years of your life to work, putting your cousin out of your thoughts, and making up your mind to pursue one certain course irrespective of him and his concerns, I will help you in this matter. Have you sufficient influence with your father to get him to give you the management of the estate?"

"I think so, if nobody puts it into his head that I am wanting to take the whole property from Harold." And for the first time during the conversation, Brian's lip trembled.

"Do you mean to say any one has ever raised such a question?"

"Yes; Maxwell told me once that probably my father would do like the rest of the Drewitts —cut me out for his favourite son; and he has tried to make Harold dissatisfied about my being the eldest. But Harold does not care who has the place as long as he rides the hunters. If he had been fond of money, or greedy,

Maxwell would have made him hate me long ago."

Geoffry Pryor was a man who, as a rule, did not swear, but he could not help uttering an oath then.

"I am that fellow's guest," he thought, "but hang me if it is fair or honest for me to eat his salt now!" and he made up his mind that he would get pressing letters from London, and return thither as soon as possible.

"Will you take the matter into consideration, and see if it be possible for you to assume the reins?" he said.

"If I promise you to drive, I will get the reins somehow," was the reply; "only tell me how you mean to help me—only show me how I can save Kincorth, and give my mother some ease, and keep my father free from anxiety, and I will work —never fear—I will work."

"I will advance money to pay off the present mortgage, and be your creditor myself; and whatever sum, in moderation, you require to work the estate satisfactorily, you shall have."

Three times Brian Drewitt made an effort to speak, and three times the words would not come.

Then he held out his hand to his benefactor, and the tears he could no longer keep back rolled down his cheeks, separately, singly, one by one.

It was not weeping—it was not excitement, the barrister had never seen anything like it before, and he was never likely to see anything like it in the future; for in the hour of his blackest trouble —in the time of his worst agony—in the day of his deepest remorse—Mr. Pryor never saw Brian Drewitt's eyes wet again.

His kindness wrung tears out of them once, but grief could not open those fountains, which seemed thenceforth dried up for ever.

Brian Drewitt's wife may have seen him cover his face, and heard him sob aloud, but I, who can only follow his footsteps to a certain point, know no more than this, that the only sign of human feeling Geoffry Pryor ever saw him evince, was when he stood on the heights near Durrow, grasping his hand as though he held it in a vice, while the big tears fell from his young eyes, one by one.

CHAPTER VIII.

BRIAN'S DIFFICULTIES.

MR. GYTON returned to London with his uncle, greatly to his disgust, for he was really enamoured of Geraldine Drewitt; "But the idea of staying on with a blue-book and a rouge-pot without you!" he remarked to Mr. Pryor.

"Cannot you ride?" asked the barrister.

"Over those winding roads for ever? No. Human nature demands a change."

"Cannot you fish?"

"No. I cannot live on fried trout, and ham and eggs, and whiskey, in those districts where fish is plentiful: add to which, that I agree with Dr. Johnson — was not it? — who said a fishing-rod had a worm at one end and a fool at the other."

"Can you not superintend matters at Durrow?"

"Durrow be hanged! We will come over with a party, but till then, Durrow sees nothing of your humble servant."

"Can you not cultivate a friendship with Harold Drewitt?"

"Much obliged, but Mr. Harold Drewitt is a young gentleman whom I admire much more than I like. No, uncle, I return with you to London by the Kingston and Holyhead packet, if you please." And Mr. Francis Gyton locked his portmanteau determinedly.

"When shall we see you in Connemara again?" asked Lady Emmeline, with her sweetest smile.

"Not until next summer, I fear," answered Mr. Pryor, and his hostess looked inconsolable.

"I wish we were going to spend the winter in London," she said, with a sigh; and Mrs. Gyton heard of that sigh, and asked her Ladyship to visit London after Christmas; a visit which Lady Emmeline enjoyed greatly, and which was most probably the happiest time she ever spent during all the years that had passed since her marriage with Maxwell Drewitt.

As for the owner of the Headlands, he felt

rejoiced exceedingly when Mr. Pryor took his leave. The visit had not turned out according to his anticipations.

There were several matters in which he had desired Mr. Pryor's co-operation and assistance, but he decided that it would be more prudent to let those matters wait.

"Twelve months can make no material difference," argued Mr. Maxwell Drewitt; "and when he returns, those young people at Kincorth will be singing to a different tune. And that reminds me I may as well call round with Ryan, and give him instructions how to proceed."

But on the road Maxwell met Mr. Ryan coming post haste to him.

"Look here," said the attorney—by this time a shabby, shuffling man of close on fifty, who smelt even at the earliest hours in the morning of whiskey, and who would now as soon have thought of calling his employer Max, as he would of addressing Lord Marsden as "Bob."

There had been a time when the pair were very intimate; when they stood very close together on Fortune's wheel; but the wheel had gone round since that, and carried Drewitt up and Ryan

down. They were very far apart now — far as master and man can stand — and though the attorney said "Look here," it was not said familiarly, but rather out of the excess of his own astonishment, with a great anxiety to know how Mr. Drewitt would receive the contents of the letter he held out for him to read.

Maxwell glanced over it — then he looked at Ryan.

"What the devil is the meaning of this?" he said.

"That there is a fresh hand at the helm," was the reply. "It is that young Brian."

"Damn him!" said Maxwell heartily. "Had not they some clause by which, if the interest were not paid, they could sell without power of redemption?"

"Yes, if the interest were demanded; but the interest has not been demanded lately."

"And curse you for a fool; why has it not been demanded?"

"By your own order, sir; by your own order, I assure you," said Ryan. "You were afraid of exciting Mr. Drewitt's apprehensions, and consequently——"

"Mr. Archibald, you mean. I am Mr. Drewitt. I am the eldest son of the eldest son, remember that, if you please."

"Mr. Archibald's apprehensions," corrected Ryan, "and——"

"You must get to know what this means," interrupted Maxwell. "You must go to old Neill, and ascertain all about it."

"I have been, sir, and Neill is quite in the dark himself. This is the last transaction he is ever to be engaged in for them. Master Brian requested him to write to us. Had he seen him first he says he would not have done it. He refused to give him any further information, and begged him to send all his father's papers back to Kincorth."

"What will be the next move do you expect?" asked Maxwell.

"To pay off the principal."

"They have got a backer," muttered Maxwell Drewitt, with a shocking oath, "and that backer is Geoffry Pryor. Are all the papers likely to go back, Ryan?" he asked, with a certain significance, which made the other turn a little pale.

"Neill will not give them up till his costs are

paid, and he has a pretty tidy bill against Mr. Drewitt. He thinks also if he retains the papers he may get back the business."

"You keep him up to that idea," said Maxwell; "and as for this interest, let them pay it if they can; and the principal too, for that matter, curse them! That young fool thinks to get the better of me. So much the worse for him, that is all."

And Maxwell Drewitt turned on his heel, and retraced his steps towards the Headlands, swearing to himself as he walked along. It was a new thing for Mr. Maxwell Drewitt to find himself worsted, and he had been worsted here.

He thought he had but to step up to Kincorth and take possession, and behold Kincorth was as far from him as ever.

Farther perhaps—for there was, as Mr. Ryan had said, a fresh hand at the helm, who was evidently about to follow his cousin's example and make the old property valuable.

"He is ploughing, he is digging, he is sowing," Maxwell remarked to Ryan about three months afterwards; "where does he get the money?" and Ryan's thoughts ran back to a time when he had put the same question to himself with regard to

Maxwell, and wondered if this younger and better Drewitt would be equally successful with his cousin.

"It is not likely, I suppose," remarked Mr. Ryan, "that he will do as well as you have done."

"No, faith," was the reply, "he is working in chains. If the young beggar did not richly deserve all he gets, I should pity any one who was trying to work under my uncle. I would rather work for the devil. He would know his own mind; a thing Archibald Drewitt never did."

And what Maxwell Drewitt said was true.

"But for Kincorth," wrote Brian to Mr. Pryor, "but for the sake of the dear old place whose roof I want to keep over the heads of my father and mother if I am able, I could sometimes almost wish I had rented a portion of Durrow from you, and tried my luck there. No person can imagine how hard I find it to carry any point, or to maintain it when carried. My father thinks I am taking too much on me, and latterly even Harold has gone over to the enemy. I have no one with me except my mother and Geraldine. Even my mother thought I ought to defer more to my father's opinions, and so I had to tell her about the mortgage. Since then she has been

with me, heart and soul, and indeed but for her I should often have felt inclined to give up in despair. But I am in the river now, and I do not mean to sink if I can help it. We have never got those papers back yet from Mr. Neill. He is keeping them against his costs, and as the papers cannot be of much importance, I think I shall not speak again to my father on the subject till you come over. Connor is doing wonders with Durrow. If the place were his own he could not be working harder to increase its value. My father's health does not improve; on the contrary, those attacks are more frequent. I have been urging him to go to Dublin, but he seems to think I want him out of the way. Perhaps when you are next here you may be able to persuade him to get some first-rate advice. My speaking seems to do more harm than good."

And Brian was quite right. The fact of his proposing anything made Mr. Drewitt object to it.

"It is hard upon you Brinbaldy," said Wilhelmina, who had married years and years before Mr. Goldich, a man far below herself in birth and social position. "It is hard upon you. I can remember the time when my uncle would not cut down a tree

because you might not like it; when he was going to build a house for you at Analore; when we were not allowed to have a door open for fear the draught might kill you, precious baby that you were; and now all the county is talking about how badly you and he hit it off, and how sorry he is Harold is not the eldest son."

"If Harold could keep the property together, I am sure I wish he were the eldest," sighed Brian.

"Dear, dear! to think about the fuss they made over you once, and to see how that young jack-a-napes has cut you out now. My husband says, Brian, that if he were you, he would not let Maxwell and Harold be so much together. He says Harold will go to the dogs entirely if he is not got out of this neighbourhood, and that you ought to see to him."

"Can I do everything?" asked Brian. "Am I Harold's father? am I the owner of Kincorth? How is it possible for me to do more than I am doing? Do you think I am master here?"

"Well, you need not be angry at me for repeating what he says; you need not snap me up like that for giving you good advice. Go on as you

choose, only don't blame us if any harm happens to Harold."

"There is no harm likely to happen to Harold," Brian would answer; but spite of this, as often as not he went straight off to his brother, and entreated him to stay more at home, not to drink so much, not to mix so freely with the lower orders, but to remember he was a Drewitt, and being such, to keep himself to himself.

"You want to make me a sneak like yourself," the boy retorted. "You take too much on you; you set yourself up a great deal too high; you are not a bit like what you used to be; you are too much of the master before your time, as Maxwell says."

Then calmly, and without a change of colour, Brian damned Maxwell.

"We will be quits some day," he remarked.

"When you have made your fortune out of mangold-wurzel and your fine new English sheep, I suppose," taunted Harold, for the English sheep had proved failures, and the success of the mangold was problematical.

"I would rather lose money on mangolds than take it out of my wife's pocket," returned Brian;

and thus they wrangled on, till oftentimes the elder brother was sick and tired of his thankless labour—of the work which was never done, and which, in the opinion of many people, had better never have been attempted.

It was hard; and this lad of twenty felt the difficulty of his position keenly. He rose early, he went to bed late, he fought hard for what he believed to be right. He did his best to fulfil his promise to Mr. Pryor, and yet the consequence was that, when Mr. Pryor returned to Connemara, he found Mr. Drewitt dreadfully dissatisfied with his son—full of complaints, full of grievances.

"It is very hard for a man to be so treated by his own child, Mr. Pryor," sobbed the invalid. "There is no use in my making any suggestions. He is only twenty, and I am sixty-four; yet you would think, to see the way he gets on, he was sixty-four instead of me. I am sure I managed my own property for many a year before he was born, but he ignores me completely—completely, sir."

"I hope Brian is never disrespectful," observed the Englishman.

"No; I cannot make any complaint on that

score; he only takes his own way; he will not be guided by me. Now there's flax. I wanted him to sow flax; but do you think he would do it? and I ordered the men to plant some young trees round that piece of land he is reclaiming over by the Point. You would hardly credit it, I suppose, but he told them to go on ploughing, and leave the trees till another season. And those trees, sir! when he comes to lay that down in grass he will have no shelter for his cattle; not as much as would shade a sheep."

Mr. Pryor took the old man's hand kindly in his own—

"My dear Mr. Drewitt," he began, and his heart was grieved, as he spoke both for the father and the son. "Will you go back in your own mind twelve months, and think of your position then—of your position now? I know, I have good reason for knowing, that had I not advanced money—had I not, in fact, taken the mortgages on Kincorth myself—the former mortgagee would have foreclosed ere this; and Brian knew this as well, and the lad is now working hard to free your property from its incumbrances. If in all cases he does not follow your advice, I am confident it is only because he feels

not right for a son to act as if his father were already dead and buried; and I must look out for Harold's interests—I must see to them."

"If you would attend to Harold's interests in the present," returned Mr. Pryor, whose patience was by this time exhausted, "and insist that he should spend his days in some profitable manner, instead of drinking, hunting, and consorting with all kinds of bad characters, it would be more to the purpose, I think, than exalting him over the son who is trying his best to do his duty."

"There you are," interrupted Mr. Drewitt, "taking Brian's side, of course: it only shows me more and more that I must see to Harold—poor lad—for who would be on his side if I and his mother were gone?"

"You are right, Mr. Drewitt," answered Mr. Pryor; "it will be better for you to see to Harold; it will save much heartburning on the boy's part and much misconception on your own. I am sorry you are so ill-advised as to believe the interests of your two sons can for the present be separated; but I have done: every man must manage his family and his affairs for himself, and strangers only do more harm than good by meddling. I am sure I

have," muttered the lawyer to himself, as he returned slowly and thoughtfully towards Durrow.

He had not, however, gained the top of the hill above Kincorth before he heard some one calling—

"Oh! Mr. Pryor, do stop; pray, pray do!" and stopping and looking back he saw Geraldine flying after him.

"I have run so fast," she panted. "I want to speak to you. I want to talk with you so much: may I walk part of the way to Durrow?"

Might she?—part of the way?—when he would have given all Durrow to have heard her promise to walk with him all through life.

At what age does a man's heart cease to beat faster, I wonder, when a pretty girl—that is, the pretty girl of his especial fancy—speaks to him?

There was a dreadful disparity between them—a quarter of a century, or thereabouts—which made Geoffry Pryor feel occasionally that he was mad for thinking of such a thing.

And perhaps he was mad; but he thought about Geraldine, from morning till night, for all that.

"I do so want to talk to you about Brian," she began. "Home is so wretched for him, you can have no idea, Mr. Pryor—none;" and Geraldine

lifted her soft dark eyes to the Englishman's face to see if he were attending to what she said. "I sometimes think he would be better away, for poor papa seems to fancy he can do nothing right—nothing."

"Your papa is not in a fit state of health to judge accurately on any subject," was the reply.

"But it is so miserable for Brian."

"Brian is doing his duty."

"It is so hard for him to have to be doing his duty so young," she answered.

"He will find it all the easier when he is old," replied Mr. Pryor; but there was nothing unkind in his tone, harsh though the truth might be.

"Could he not do his duty any place else?" she asked. "He tells me he could not; that he must make a struggle to keep Kincorth; that he chose to go into battle, and that he will not turn his back on the fray: but still, I thought I would ask you," finished Geraldine; and the dark eyes were lifted to his once again, and her soft Irish voice laid an accent at once pathetic and imploring on the "you."

"Dear child," answered Mr, Pryor—she seemed so young and so trustful, so childlike and so pretty,

that he would have liked to gather her in his arms and carry her to his home, out of the way of sorrow and trouble—"you would not have your brother a coward; he has elected to tread a rough road, but he will reach the end some day; and you must help, and not hinder him on his way."

"But if you knew, Mr. Pryor; if you knew—papa is so—so jealous of him, and Harold is the same; and everybody seems against him—every—every one."

"What a foolish little girl you are!" he said; and the longing grew stronger to take such a little bundle of folly to himself for ever. "I am not against Brian, you are not against Brian, your mamma is not against Brian, many people are very much for Brian, and think him an amazingly fine young fellow. Besides, he is doing right, and he will be glad hereafter to think he did strive to keep a roof over his father's head. Although Mr. Drewitt does not thank him for it now, Brian will be glad to remember at some future day how he stood between his father and the world."

"I wish I could be of any use," she said, with such a wistful look in her sweet face that Geoffry

Pryor would have given more than Durrow to touch it just once with his lips.

"You can be of use," he answered; "you can tell Brian, whenever he is dispirited, not to lose heart: you can tell him that the evil is only apparent while the good is real: beyond all" —he hesitated for a moment, and then went on—"you can tell him to be kind to, and patient and forbearing with his father; patient as he would be if he were lying on his death-bed; because, dear Geraldine—may I call you Geraldine?"

"Yes, anything," she replied; "because why?"

"He will not, I fear, have to exercise his patience so long as he would——"

"Oh! Mr. Pryor—Mr. Pryor!" and the colour faded out of her face and the tears sprang into her eyes.

"My dear, it is true," he said; "and that thought will make both you and him very tender and very good."

"Papa, my poor, poor papa:" it was all she could say; but she stretched out her hands towards Mr. Pryor, as though in this dumb fashion she were asking his help.

"God knows when it may be," he went on, taking her hands; "but you must be prepared any day, my poor child—Geraldine."

"Mamma, mamma!" and Geraldine drew her hands away from him and covered her face from sight; "mamma, mamma! I think I will go home now," she added after a pause. "I think I will go back to him: thank you, Mr. Pryor;" and she left him crying bitterly.

CHAPTER IX.

AT THE DAWNING.

It was easy enough to see from Geraldine's manner that although she had never put the precarious state of her father's health before herself plainly, yet that she had vaguely dreaded the worst.

As a rule, our fears travel so much faster than actual danger, that before danger absolutely appears in sight, we are well prepared for its advent; and there was not one of Mr. Drewitt's family, unless indeed it might be Harold, who had not been long prepared for the worst.

Mrs. Drewitt, and Brian and Geraldine had known, for many a day, that he could never be better. Once admit the idea that improvement is impossible, and it is not difficult to imagine that the last change of all is probable.

There are times when it is the truest wisdom to look upon our living as dying; when it is well to meet the mournful truth boldly and without disguise; when it is well to buckle on all our charity and forbearance; to call together love, and duty, and tenderness, so that we may not pain the departing by opposition which might be imperative for their sakes as well as our own, were they not already at the mouth of that river where all human leave-takings must be ended.

"If we had but known how ill he was—If we had only imagined he was dying!"

"Had we thought he was in danger!"

How often we hear these sentences—happy only if we have never had need to utter them ourselves!

Geoffry Pryor resolved that Geraldine should have no sorrow of this kind. It was right for her to understand, and yet the intelligence did not seem strange to her.

She had feared—and the fear was true—and she went down the hill towards Kincorth, crying, as I have said, bitterly.

As she went Mr. Pryor began to marvel whether he had done right; whether, after all, Mr. Drewitt's

case was so hopeless; but then he remembered many an unfailing symptom which assured him that Kincorth would soon be in want of a new master.

"And the sooner the better, say I," was the conclusion he arrived at; but then his conscience chid him, and he added, "though God knows best."

As for Harold, nothing could induce him to think badly of his father's state.

"You told me more than a year ago he could not be cured, and he is alive now," he argued.

"I said I feared he never could be better, and I was right," answered Brian.

"Well, he may live for a hundred years yet," was the reply. "He is dying—you are dying—I am dying; but although we are dying we are not near our deaths; at least I hope not," added Harold; and he went whistling out of the gates, to seek for more cheerful companionship abroad.

He did not like all work and no play, not he; give him a good tumbler of punch, a pretty country-girl for partner, and a jolly good dance up at Regan's—a public-house on the way to Cragantlet, where he and a lot of other young

fellows got together — and Kincorth might go hang.

"'For I'm a fine young Irish gentleman,
All of the ancient school,'"

Master Harold would shout out as he came reeling home, arm-in-arm with three or four more as drunk as himself; and Brian, who had never taken a glass too much wine in his life, looked at his brother and asked helplessly—"What can I do? what can I do?"

He never knew where to find Harold when he wanted him; and one night when the worst, so long apprehended, had to be faced, Brian, flinging himself on the fastest thing in the stable—Madcap—knew no more where to go to look for his brother than if he were the greatest stranger in the world.

"There is a dance up at Regan's to-night, sir," said the man who had saddled the chesnut; "and if you'll ride up there, I'll cut across the hills to Durrow, for Mr. Maxwell's dining with Mr. Pryor, and should Master Harold not be at Regan's he'll be there."

"Which is the nearest road to Regan's?" Brian asked, stroking the neck of the chesnut, who was

one of the most fidgety brutes a man ever undertook to ride.

"Straight on till Cragantlet, then take the turn before you come to the gates, and keep on about half-a-mile. He's nearly sure to be there; but if he's not there, you might call at Dan Glynn's as you're comin' back."

"I'll call there as I'm going," was the reply; for Dan Glynn was an individual who resided about a mile inland from Duranmore, and who was reputed to make his living by less honest means than tilling bad land or sending lean sheep to Ballinasloe fair for the Leinster graziers to buy and fatten.

It was a dark night for August, but Brian knew every inch of the road, and so for that matter did the chesnut, who brought him to the Moor Farm in less than a quarter of an hour.

Brian rode straight up to the door and, without dismounting, rapped for admittance with the handle of his whip.

There were no lights to be seen, there was no one stirring about the place; but the youth knew Mr. Glynn's habits, and not thinking these at all sufficient reasons for supposing the household had

retired to rest, he jumped to the ground, and with whip and boots made such vigorous onslaughts on the door as soon brought Mr. Glynn out of his bed to inquire what the —— he wanted.

"I want my brother, Glynn; do you know where he is?"

"The Lord be good to me, it's Mister Brian. I beg your pardon, sir, I'm sure; I thought it was some damned gauger. No, I haven't seen Masther Harold, not these two days. Anything wrong, sir? can I be of any help?"

"No, thank you," answered Brian, who had one foot already in the stirrup. "I'll go on to Regan's."

"How's the Masther, Mister Brian?"

"Dying, Glynn," was the reply that came back through the night, for the chesnut was galloping down the cross road leading to Duranmore, and Brian turned round in his saddle to shout out these words.

"Faith, then, an' if he's dyin' it's not Dan Glynn that'll go back till his bed, an' sleep contint. I'll follow the boy: shure an' it's at a time like this a man stands in need of company, let him be rich or let him be poor." And straightway Mr. Glynn "clapped a saddle" on his black pony Tom, and

cantered away to Cragantlet in pursuit of Brian Drewitt.

Brian, meantime, had gone galloping on under the darkness. He gave the chesnut her head, and she went tearing away as though she thought he was riding a steeple-chase. Over those lonely roads, what did it matter? Among those desolate hills, who cared if he rode like a fiend through the night? The same country as Maxwell had traversed, while the moon shone down on lake, and hill, and bog, and ravine, Brian now dashed through without turning his eyes to right or left. He thought of his father—of the great mystery—of how hard he had tried to do his duty—and of how his reward was—

"Harold, Harold," but never once, "Brian, my son."

And now his father was going where all his eldest born had tried to effect could benefit him no more. He would never see Kincorth clear of debt; never know how disinterested Brian had been; never understand how this boy-man had worked to free him from anxiety; never comprehend how wild and reckless, how selfish and thoughtless, his favourite son was growing up.

"It is best as it is," thought Brian, bitterly;

"better for him to die than for Harold to break his heart?" And as he thought this, the sound of music was borne down the lane, and he heard shouting and laughing and the noise of the dancers' feet as they were thumped at regular intervals upon the earthen floor.

"Hold my horse, boy," he shouted to an urchin standing by the open door, and the boy ran forward and took the mare, and was about to lead her round to the yard, when Brian stopped him.

"Don't put her up," he said, "I only want to speak a word inside. I shall be out again in a minute," and he strode into the house, a finer-looking man than Harold was ever likely to grow to.

"Is my brother within, Mrs. Regan?" he asked of the landlady, who met him at the door.

"Mr. Brian! an' it's welcome ye are, sir. Your brother? I'm not just sure, sir; will ye step in and sit down while I see?"

"I'll see for myself, Mrs. Regan, if you please," answered Brian, gently putting the landlady on one side. "You need not be afraid; I'm not going to scold the boy; nobody is going to be angry with

him, only his father wants to see him before he dies?"

"God save us all, is he that bad, Mr. Brian?" But Brian had already flung open the kitchen-door and was among the merrymakers.

In a moment every dancer stood still, every voice was hushed, and only the piper who had been playing Paddy O' Rafferty went on with his tune, unmindful of the intruder.

"Hush! Jamsie," said one in his ear, "it is the young master;" and the piper stopped.

Although it was summer, a tremendous turf-fire blazed on the hearth, and collected together in the kitchen were a number of pretty young country-girls, young farmers, labourers, and two or three gentlemen's sons, foremost among whom stood Harold.

There were wooden forms round the room for the convenience of the lookers on; there was whiskey in abundance; one or two dogs lay on the hearth, and the blind piper was accommodated with a seat in a dark corner.

"Welcome, Brian!" shouted out Harold, boisterously; "welcome! we'll get you a pretty partner and drink your health with three times three."

"Not to-night, Harold," answered Brian. "I want you a minute; come here;" and thinking all the time of the room in which he had left his father, of the contrast between the one scene and the other, he led his brother into the passage, and told him he must hurry home.

Like one listening in a dream, Harold heard all Brian said in silence.

In silence also he allowed himself to be taken out of the house into the darkness, to the spot where the chesnut was standing.

"Don't spare her, Harold," said Brian, helping his brother into the saddle; "lose no time."

"But you, Brian—but you?" and Harold was on the ground again.

"I'll walk back," was the answer. "Hang it! can't you do as I tell you for once? Jump up; it is you he wants to see—not me."

And Brian almost lifted his brother into his seat as he spoke.

"Are you all right now?" he asked.

"Yes, only I wish——"

Brian struck the mare on her flank, and the creature was off through the darkness, through the night, bearing Harold towards Kincorth.

A mile after leaving Regan's, Brian met Glynn. "Take my pony, Master Brian," he said; "I brought him up here on purpose, and I can send to Kincorth for him in the morning."

"And you, Glynn?"

"I can tramp it," was the answer; and Brian accepted his offer; only as he rode he wondered how much of all the respect and civility which was accorded to him he owed to the fact of his being the eldest son, the next heir.

"It is Harold they like," he reflected, "and not me."

But Brian was wrong; the country-people liked Harold much, but they liked him better. They were fond of the free-mannered impetuous boy, but they were fonder still of the young gentleman who was doing his best so soon; who was out with the labourers in the morning, and was overseering the men, and planning this and measuring that, from sunrise to sunset.

"Doing his best to keep the ould place from the stranger," as they pathetically said.

It was two o'clock before Brian reached home. Glynn's pony cast a shoe six miles from Kincorth, and the young man had been obliged to walk him every step of those six miles home.

"An' ye never stopped to pick up the shoe, Master Brian," said Nannie, who was now stooped with age, and old and withered, regretfully. "I only hope no harm will come of it. Won't you eat a bite before you go up to him? He has been asking for you."

"For my brother, I suppose you mean," answered Brian; "is he not with him?"

"Yes; but it has been Brian, Brian, this last two hours. You look white like, won't you have a drop of something?"

"No, Nannie, not now; let me alone, like a good soul. Where is my mother?"

"Where wud she be but wid him?" was the reply; and Brian ascended the staircase and entered his father's room.

There lay Mr. Drewitt, waiting for the final summons; there sat Mrs. Drewitt, and Harold, and Geraldine, and Doctor Sheen. From side to side the dying man tossed restlessly. "Brian, Brian!" he cried; and Brian answered, "I am here."

"Will you take care of your mother, Brian, and your sister, and—and Harold?"

"I will, father," and the young man bowed his head as though he felt himself in the presence of something mightier than mortality.

"Will you be good to him, patient with him?"

"I will," and Brian Drewitt took his father's hand.

"Swear it," murmured the dying man.

"As I hope for peace here and salvation hereafter, I swear!" said Brian.

"I have left you all," Mr. Drewitt muttered feebly; "perhaps it is not right—and I did not mean to do it—but you will be good to him, Brian, you will?"

"Before God!" was the reply.

"And may He enable you to fulfil your vow!" said a voice behind him; and Brian, looking round, saw the Rector of Duranmore, who laid a kindly hand on his shoulder.

"My boy," he whispered, "you have undertaken great responsibilities this night; but God will give you strength if you ask for His help."

And then they all knelt down, while the clergyman prayed that intensely-pathetic prayer which is ordered, in the visitation of the sick, for those for whom there appeareth small hope of recovery.

"Amen," said the sick man, but there was no other Amen, only sobs from the women and

Harold, and a profound silence as regarded Brian and Doctor Sheen.

"Amen!"—the sands in the glass had almost run out; the sun of his life was close upon its setting; the river of his existence was flowing out into the sea.

Amen! His day was declining; his grass withering. This man was going to his long home, and the mourners were gathered round about him.

Amen! He could not take up his life again and make a better thing of it; he could not go back through the years and redress the wrong, and undo the misery he had brought on others. For him in this world there was no future, only a barren and unprofitable past.

Amen! Throw open the shutters, and fling up the windows, that he may look his last in the grey light of morning, over the country he has loved so long.

"Lift me up," he said feebly; and they raised him up that he might see the trees standing quietly in the first blush of dawn — the sea lying still as a glassy lake—the grand old mountains and Eversbeg's Head.

From the far-off mountains, from the nearer

hills, from the sea and the woods, and the cold grey sky, the dying man's eyes came back slowly to the room where was a "sound of weeping and a noise of lamentation."

Maxwell had come in and stood beside the bed, waiting till his uncle should notice him. Against an old-fashioned escritoire leant Mr. Pryor, who felt himself an intruder and a stranger in the midst of such a scene. The Rector supported the sick man, and whispered some words of consolation to him. He saw the end coming; he knew the moment when the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men bow themselves, and the grinders cease, was close at hand; and though he could not hear what the dying man was muttering, he yet liked to see his lips move, hoping it was in prayer.

He looked very peaceful; his face was calm and placid; but as he brought back his eyes from the Bennebeola mountains, from Eversbeg and the nearer hills, his glance fell on Maxwell, who stepped closer to speak to him.

But his uncle turned from him, and calling out "Brian—Brian!" fell forward into the arms of his first-born.

And over his father's grey head, which lay on his bosom, Brian looked defiantly at his cousin. There was no man living could step between them now; in that hour his son was closer to Archibald Drewitt than the wife of his bosom.

As the magnet attracts iron, so the stronger nature attracts the weaker in the hour of its most grievous need.

No man could separate the father and his child now—for still the grey head lay on Brian's breast, growing heavier—heavier each moment.

There was a great silence in the chamber, and then Doctor Sheen walked round the bed, and taking one cold hand in his, felt the pulse.

It was gone—the "silver cord was loosed, and the golden bowl broken, and the pitcher broken at the fountain, and the wheel broken at the cistern."

The dust had returned to the earth, and the spirit unto God who gave it.

CHAPTER X.

AFTER THE FUNERAL.

It was all over—another Drewitt was gone from Kincorth—another Drewitt was about to swell that grim assemblage who lay shrouded and coffined in Eversbeg Abbey, waiting for the judgment—and through the darkened rooms and about the accustomed passages the family moved slowly and mournfully. Not one was glad Archibald Drewitt had passed to his last home—not one—child—servant—tenant—relative, unless indeed it might be Maxwell Drewitt, who was, his wife remarked, a little more irritable than usual, if that were possible.

Naturally Brian took the management of affairs. He ordered a hearse from Galway, the nearest town where such a luxury was obtainable. He

despatched intimations of the death to all the gentry in the neighbourhood; he sent hat-bands and scarfs to all the clergy, dissenting, Roman Catholic and Protestant, within reach, (you perceive, reader, more devolves upon the relations in Ireland than in England,) and he saw that popular requirements were attended to in the kitchen and servants' hall.

Brian was not one to throw disrespect on his father's memory by neglecting any of the customary conventionalities, and accordingly, while the corpse was watched up stairs by a profusion of ancient women, in a room lighted by wax candles, whiskey was drunk *ad libitum* in the servants' department, and the house slept neither by day nor by night.

There is nothing in which Ireland differs more from England than in her observances concerning the dead; there is nothing which grates more against English feeling than the riot and disorder of an Irish household after a death; while the stately and undemonstrative propriety of an establishment on this side of the water, where there is mourning for the departed, strikes the Hibernian as cold and unfeeling.

In Kincorth the popular taste was allowed to run riot. By the lower orders, Archibald Drewitt had been idolized; by the lower orders, his loss was lamented exceedingly. It is possible for a vast amount of regret to co-exist with an unlimited supply of whiskey, and Duranmore sorrowed over Archibald Drewitt exceedingly.

As for the family, what more can I say than that they mourned—that Mrs. Drewitt's grief was silent, and Harold's passionate, and Brian's stern —that the wife bowed down her head and wept for the husband of her youth—that the children bewailed themselves for the father they should never in this world see more?

All the latter and more unamiable part of Archibald Drewitt's life was by common consent ignored—his family, his tenantry, his dependents, and society generally, never spoke of the man who, grey and bent, full of fancies and of grievances, had gone about among them, but rather they talked of the genial Irish gentleman—of the loving, gracious parent—of the kindly, reckless master, who had dwelt with them for so long.

"An' it's Mr. Brian that will be the proper man to fill his shoes," crooned the old people over the turf-fire in the kitchen; "though he is not so free

as his father, and is quieter like, still it's the cliver man he'll make, and it's the fine place Kincorth will be yit, God bliss it! The poor Masther had not the same sinse as his son, and he went through a power of money too, intirely."

"But the poor man niver was turned from his dure."

"An' he niver spoke a hard word to man, woman, or child."

"An' he was easily served."

"An' he had always the kind look and the pleasant smile, meet him where you would."

"An' shure, it wasn't his fault if he niver looked afther the dirty money. He wasn't reared to the like."

"Ay, but it 'ud be betther now for Mr. Brian if his father had thought o' them that was to come afther him."

"Ye can't both spend and have," remarked one man, oracularly; "an' it's no use frettin' about the goold that can niver be brought back again. He was good to many a poor body the time of the distress, and it will be remimbered till him now, God rest his soul!" and the speaker crossed himself.

Thus they talked over the turf-fire while the

whiskey circulated, and the servants, who were called away at intervals, returned to communicate any strange piece of intelligence that had been made known to them upstairs.

How the mistress was looking—how Master Harold was taking on—how Miss Geraldine had fallen fast asleep on the drawing-room sofa, "tired out wid the grief, poor thing"—how the corpse was looking more and more beautiful—how they did say the funeral was going to be the grandest thing ever seen in West Connemara.

Brian Drewitt had determined in his own soul that what the people said should prove true. He would do honour to his father. No man should whisper that a Drewitt of Kincorth went to his long home with a badge of poverty on his coffin, though that badge had been won for himself by years of prodigality—of reckless expenditure—of senseless profusion.

Poor they were, heaven knew—poor in consequence of his father's bad management; but they would scrape together enough to bury him, as he himself might have desired, right royally—as the Drewitts had been wont to travel to their vault in Eversbeg Abbey, down by the sea.

The fourth day was that fixed for the funeral. Like Abraham, the Irish would lose no time about burying their dead "out of their sight." Not out of their memories, for there is no country in the world where the dead are remembered longer, or mourned for more earnestly. Only out of their sight; and this speedy interment, which so shocks and astonishes the English, has, I think, its origin in the different customs of the two countries with regard to the bodies of the deceased.

Till earth receives earth, the Irish never willingly leave a corpse alone for a moment. Till the grave is closed, nothing in a house of any kind, sort, or description, can go on as usual.

Now, human nature cannot remain with the clay, whence the soul has departed, beyond a certain period; further, an establishment cannot sit up for ever. Moreover, the novelty even of a death wears off. It is like a state visit, exciting for the time, but apt to grow wearisome if long protracted; and for all these reasons, and for many more of the same kind, which it would take too long to mention, a "rest day, a guest day, and a prest day," are the utmost measure of time that a body honoured, as is

the case in Ireland, ought to intrude its presence on the family.

The prest day is a stretch of courtesy across the channel; but not to fail in due respect, Brian accorded it to his father's remains.

He required the time to arrange matters to his liking, and when the morning came he had everything prepared to do honour to the man who was going, after all these years, to lie down beside Nicholas Drewitt, and George Drewitt, and all the long line of Drewitts who were waiting in Eversbeg Abbey for that hour when the "heavens and the earth shall flee away, and the sea give up her dead, and every mountain and island be moved out of their place."

It was a magnificent funeral; never had such a one passed through Duranmore before. All the gentry for twenty miles round came in their private carriages, drawn by the best horses their stables could turn out; people who had not carriages came on cars, in dog-carts, in gigs, on horseback. All the men who had ever paid rent to Archibald Drewitt, though many of them had passed with his lands into the hands of strangers, came to do honour to him now; all Maxwell Drewitt's ten-

antry, all Lady Emmeline's, all Mr. Pryor's, all the tradesfolk out of Duranmore, all the fishermen, all the labourers, fell into rank behind the black hearse, with its nodding plumes, with its four stately horses, that led the way to Eversbeg.

Under the trees that bent their branches over the road; round the bay where the waves came rippling up on the shore; through Duranmore—where the dead had once made himself so busy about rival candidates, about forgotten politics—past the cottage where Ryan had again taken up his abode; over the hill beyond Duranmore, and down into the hollow where the Abbey stood lonely and desolate, the funeral procession wound sadly and slowly.

It was as fine a day as ever shone upon the earth; the sunbeams fell in great patches on the tombstones, on the monuments, on the grass in Eversbeg graveyard; the great mountains lifted their heads to the blue sky grandly and unsympathizingly as ever; outside Eversbeg Bay the Atlantic lay calm and quiet as a lake. The ivy about the east window waved its branches as the light breeze passed by: frightened at the incursion of such a multitude, the birds flew out with a great

noise and twitter, while the sheep bounded away like wild deer over the broken wall and up the hill-side to a convenient distance, where they turned and looked down upon the scene below as though it had been a spectacle and they the spectators.

The rusty gate of the churchyard stood wide, but the hearse could not pass through it, and the nearest of kin accordingly bore the coffin into the centre of the ruins, preceded by the Rector of Duranmore, who walked slowly along, telling to the sea and to the mountains, to the sunshine and to the mourners, the one great truth that shall endure when there is no more sea and no more sorrow—

"He that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

They placed the coffin on trestles, in what had once been the centre of the Abbey; and there, with no covering but the sky, in the midst of that ruined church, with nettles and grass underfoot, with the elder-tree spreading abroad its branches in the chancel, with ferns growing where the holy water had wont to be placed, the funeral service proceeded.

Think, oh! reader, of what that service must have sounded at such a time in such a place.

Pigmies seemed the men in comparison to the eternal hills, but yet the Rector lifted up his voice, and declared—

"'Lord, thou hast been our refuge from one generation to another, before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the earth and the world were made. Thou art God from everlasting and world without end.'"

Many a one present sobbed when that psalm was read out. As David bowed the heart of all the men of Judah even as the heart of one man, so almost as one man that great assemblage was moved at the words of the sweet singer of Israel. But there were two present whose eyes never moistened, but who looked straight at one another over the coffin, each seemingly keeping watch on his fellow.

It was the same when they stood beside the vault; and when the Rector said, with a perhaps unintentional emphasis—

"'Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts,'" more than one of the group round the grave noticed the look Brian Drewitt gave Maxwell.

"What's up, do you suppose?" whispered Connor to Dan Glynn, who chanced to be close at his elbow.

"I don't know," was the reply; "but did you not see the shove Maxwell gave him when he went to take the right hand in the procession? I thought coffin and all would have been over."

"Have you any idea what it means?"

"No good," said Dan, prophetically; and very vaguely Mr. Pryor was thinking the same thing.

He could not imagine what had gone wrong, but he felt satisfied the day would not pass over peaceably; and when the service was finished, when all that man could ever do for Archibald Drewitt was accomplished, when the living had left the dead to take his long rest under the shadow of the hills, within sound of the great sea, the barrister, sitting in the same carriage with the cousins, would have given much to know the probable result of the next few hours.

"Can he have any power we know nothing of?" speculated Mr. Pryor: "have they had any quarrel unheard of by me?" and he ran over possible and impossible circumstances likely to account for the hostile attitude assumed by both.

Almost in silence the four drove back to Kincorth. In one corner of the carriage, with his back to the horses, Harold was crying. Beside him Brian sat with his arms crossed, staring defiantly at Maxwell, who, employed in biting his nails down to below the quick, never troubled himself to open his lips to any one.

But as they passed through the entrance gates and up under the arching trees to the house, Mr. Pryor noticed that Maxwell bent forward and looked out—out over lawn and field and garden, with the air of triumph he had noticed once before.

"What can be the meaning of it?" marvelled Mr. Pryor, but he was not left very long in doubt.

Had Brian not been a drop's blood to the late owner of Kincorth, Maxwell could not more completely have ignored his existence than was the case.

"Pull up those blinds," were the first words he spoke when he entered the house.

"Do nothing of the kind, Robert," said Brian, and once again he and Maxwell exchanged glances of defiance.

"Shall I go away?" asked Mr. Pryor; "you

would rather, I am sure, not have any stranger present when the will is read?"

"No, stay, if you please," answered Brian. "I feel as if something were going to happen, though I have not the remotest idea what. Mr. James Butler will read the will. Shall we get it over at once?"

They passed into the dining-room, where Mr. Butler was already seated, with one sealed packet and several loose papers lying before him. As Mrs. Drewitt and Geraldine entered he rose, and remained standing till they had taken their places. For a minute afterwards indeed he stood as if irresolute, but then drawing up his chair to the table, he said, addressing himself to Mr. Pryor—

"I have looked, at Mr. Brian Drewitt's desire, through all the papers left by his late father, and can discover no trace of a will likely to be available at the present moment. I find two or three rough drafts, which were prepared for him by his former legal adviser, Mr. Bartholomew Neill, none of which Mr. Neill informs me met with his approval. It would seem as though he had intended to make some separate provision for his younger son, but he has failed to carry out that

design. An unfortunate difference between my father and the late Mr. Drewitt prevented our having such an intimate knowledge of his affairs as might now be desirable. Mr. Neill has intimated that a will was made by him, and executed by Mr. Drewitt, which will it would seem as though Mr. Drewitt must subsequently have destroyed, as I can discover no vestige of it."

"What is that sealed packet there, Mr. Butler?" asked Maxwell.

"It is a will, dated on the cover, 1818, which would of course be inoperative at the present juncture, since Mr. Drewitt's marriage took place fourteen years subsequently, and marriage renders all wills made prior to that event null and void."

"Not all wills, Mr. Butler," said Mr. Pryor.

"Read this one, at all events," broke in Brian Drewitt; and Mr. Butler took up the packet. "But stop a moment," he added. "Suppose it should be of no effect; what would then be the result?"

"Just the same as though your father had died intestate."

"And if he had died intestate?"

"You would succeed, of course."

Across the room Brian looked defiantly at

Maxwell, who returned the look calmly and steadily.

"Had not we better proceed to business?" he said, addressing Mr. Butler. "I shall be glad to return home as soon as possible."

"And so shall I," murmured Wilhelmina, thinking of her last baby.

Mr. Pryor walked across the room and seated himself beside Brian, while Mr. Butler broke the seals, took out the enclosure, and began.

There is no need for me, reader, to weary you with the contents of that will. It had been made shortly after Mr. Drewitt's accession to Kincorth, and set forth that as he, the testator, had succeeded to the property to the exclusion of his eldest brother and his family, he desired to restore the property to the elder branch after his death. Never being likely to marry, (he proceeded to declare,) it was his desire that all his estates, real and personal, should pass to his brother; or, in the event of his brother's decease, to Maxwell, son of the said George Drewitt, chargeable with so-and-so and so-and-so.

It was a tremendously lengthy document, and Mr. James Butler read on through the catalogue

of estates that had now most of them passed into other hands—wearily and rapidly.

"I should think my father must have paid for it by the foot," he was considering, when suddenly he turned over the last page and caught sight of something that made him pause, and glance across at Brian.

"Go on," said the young man; "I am attending," and Mr. Butler went on—to signed, sealed, and delivered, when he stopped once again.

"Is that all?" asked Mr. Pryor.

"No, there is a codicil."

"Of what date?" inquired the barrister, rising and standing with both hands on the table, while Maxwell's eyes grew darker and darker, and the veins in his forehead swelled and blackened—"of what date?"

"September 28th, 1832, more than three months after Mr. Drewitt's marriage."

"What is the codicil?" said Brian.

"Read it," suggested Mr. Pryor, and Mr. Butler read on.

When he had finished, every man present looked in the face of his neighbour, for the codicil confirmed the will. It mentioned Mrs. Drewitt's join-

ture; all present were clear on this point, for Mr. Butler was requested by Mr. Pryor to read it over again. Then the barrister took the will and looked at it.

"When will Brian be of age, Mrs. Drewitt?" he asked, turning towards the widow.

"The third of next April," she replied.

"And what is the date of the codicil, Mr. Butler?" was his next question.

"September the 28th, sir," answered Mr. Butler.

Mr. Pryor went through a mental calculation, through every turn of which Maxwell followed him.

"Did not the 28th fall on a Sunday?" he said, suddenly addressing Maxwell; but Maxwell was not to be trapped.

"I am sure I cannot tell," he said, and he thrust his hands into the very bottom of his pockets.

"The best thing, it seems to me, now that we can do is to send for Mr. Neill," remarked Mr. Pryor.

"I doubt if he will come," said Mr. Butler.

"Who was Mr. Drewitt's solicitor in 1832?" asked the barrister.

"My father," answered Mr. James Butler.

"Oh!" remarked Mr. Pryor; then he said to Mr. James Butler, "Is there anything more to be done?" and Mr. James Butler said that there was not, so far as he knew.

"Then we need not detain Mrs. Drewitt: all this must be very unpleasant to her," was Mr. Pryor's next observation, and he held the door open for her and her daughter to pass out.

"What does it all mean, Mr. Pryor?" she whispered. "I do not understand it."

"I do not exactly understand it myself yet," he replied. "We must make inquiries about the missing will."

And he walked back into the dining-room, without, however, closing the door behind him.

"I suppose we cannot do any good by standing here, looking at one another," he said, making a sign to Brian to remain silent, while Maxwell marched across the apartment, and taking one hand out of his pocket slammed to the door.

"I wish to make a remark," he commenced, returning to his former position. "I wish to state that this will has taken me unawares."

"You lie!" interrupted Brian.

"I have not the slightest doubt on the point,

Mr. Drewitt," answered Mr. Pryor. "And if such a proceeding were not illegal, I should say the best thing you could do would be to put this will in the fire, and proceed as though your uncle had died intestate."

Maxwell bit his lip, but putting a curb on his temper, he proceeded—

"I shall do nothing rashly, I shall make no hasty promises. I must think over the position in which this will places me, before committing myself in any way. Thirty-seven years have elapsed since my father was disinherited in favour of Brian's father, and now, by a curious fatality, Brian is disinherited for me. The estates were then valuable; now, most of those estates are owned by strangers, and the property which is left is heavily mortgaged, as no one knows better than you, Mr. Pryor. With a large rent-roll, my uncle did nothing for us. Out of the little his extravagance has left, I will, however, do something for his children, if they permit me."

"You shall never do anything for me," retorted Brian. "I will never take a sixpence from you; nor shall one belonging to me, if I can help it."

"Be silent, Brian," entreated Mr. Pryor.

"I will not be silent," said Brian. "He has cheated us somehow; if that other will be destroyed, he had some hand in making away with it. He has determined for years and years and years to own Kincorth; and he has got it. Curse you, Maxwell Drewitt! curse you, for a false-hearted, double-faced, lying scoundrel!"

"Don't stop so soon," sneered Maxwell; "it is safe to insult a man in his own house."

"Then if it be your house, may it prove a sorrowful one to you! may you never have an hour's happiness in it! as you are childless, so may you die desolate!"

"Take that, you foul-tongued young beggar," said Maxwell, and he struck him a back-handed blow across the mouth.

"Oh! Brian, Brian!" cried Harold, and he flew at Maxwell like a tiger.

But Maxwell put the boy aside, and holding him from him at arm's length, went on—

"Take your protégé with you, Mr. Pryor, out of my sight; and keep him out of it, or I may do him an injury. Is it my fault that his father was a fool? Is it my fault that Kincorth should come back to its rightful owner? If Brian thinks it

does not now belong to me in law, as it always did in equity, let him contest the point. For my part, I swear that, while I have a shilling, he shall never now own an acre of my land."

"You have done for yourself, at any rate, Brian," remarked Mr. Goldich, taking the young man by the arm, and forcibly leading him out of the room. "What an idiot you must be," went on Mr. Maxwell Drewitt's brother-in-law, "not to stick up to him! because, if the other will be destroyed—and I have not the remotest doubt in life myself but that your father did put it in the fire when he took that notion about Harold—where are you without his help—just tell me that?"

But Brian refused to answer that or any other question which Mr. Goldich might feel inclined to propound.

He said, "I wish to heaven you would leave me alone!" and with this explicit declaration separated himself from his relative at the foot of the staircase.

Very slowly and very wearily he ascended to his own apartment, while Mr. Goldich returned to the dining-room.

Maxwell met him in the doorway.

"You came here to hear the will read, I believe, sir," he observed.

"Yes — with Wilhelmina," answered Mr. Goldich.

"Then, as you have heard the will read, you and Wilhelmina can both go home."

"Well, I'm damned!" exclaimed Mr. Goldich; and he never put his foot inside Kincorth again.

CHAPTER XI

FAREWELL.

THE first thing Maxwell Drewitt did when he got rid of his visitors was to order a room to be prepared for his accommodation.

"And, Robert, tell Flynn to put the saddle on Madcap, and to bring her round directly."

"Yes, sir."

"Give my compliments to Mrs. Drewitt, and say I shall be glad to speak to her alone for a few minutes."

"Yes, sir."

And he walked up and down the room until Robert reappeared.

"Mrs. Drewitt's compliments, sir, and she is in the breakfast-parlour."

That was the first note of war on Mrs. Drewitt's part; and Maxwell accepted it as such.

Nevertheless, he repaired to the breakfast-parlour, where Mrs. Drewitt was talking to Mr. Pryor.

"I thought," said Maxwell, "I saw you leave with Mr. Butler."

"I only went so far as the gate. I wished to speak to Mrs. Drewitt before I returned to Durrow; but I have said all I had to say, and am going directly."

"Not on my account, I hope," answered Maxwell, with a great accession of civility. "I merely wanted to tell Mrs. Drewitt that I trust she will consider Kincorth her home for the present. I have no desire to make her position at all unpleasant. I am quite willing to meet her halfway in any reasonable plan for the future. And if Brian will apologize for his extraordinary conduct, I am ready to forgive and forget."

"But I am not, Maxwell," she answered. "You have always hated me, and you have always hated my children. Twenty-one years ago you told me you disliked me, and why? For twenty-one years you have been scheming and plotting to get us

out of Kincorth; and your schemes and your plots have been successful. I cannot forget, and I cannot forgive. As if it were not trouble enough to lose my husband, I must also see my children beggars." At which point Mrs. Drewitt burst into tears, and Maxwell answered—

"When my father lost this property he accepted that loss without a murmur. Many a one now living can tell you that. It is not half so hard for your sons as it was for my father, for they are unencumbered, and he was married and had a family: you have your jointure; my father had not a sixpence. Kincorth, and the other farms and estates, which we have usually put under one head and called Kincorth, brought in at that day fifteen thousand a year. Without mortgages its nett value was probably eight thousand a year. Am I stating my case fairly, Mr. Pryor?"

"I have no reason to suppose otherwise," was the reply.

"After thirty-seven years Kincorth returns to the elder branch absolutely valueless; so valueless that I declare to you, were it not that it has been in the family for more generations than I could tell you, I would let Mr. Pryor foreclose to-morrow

and trouble myself with the place no more: do you believe what I am saying?"

She made no answer, and he proceeded.

"I must ask you, Mrs. Drewitt, now, to look back to the time when you came first to Kincorth. What had we out of the property?—food. Had we anything else? were we well-dressed? were we well-lodged? were not we thrust to the wall? were we not intruders and dependents in the house of our fathers? Had we anything which a gentleman's children had a right to expect at the hands of the person who had supplanted that gentleman? Many and various were the humiliations I experienced in those the early days of my life. But I have no desire to pay back my uncle's family in kind. Many a long year ago, Mrs. Drewitt, you were good enough to sympathise with me and to entreat me not to leave Kincorth——"

She made a gesture of impatience, but he disregarded it and went on.

"Since then I have succeeded; I have been prosperous; I am wealthy, and the owner of the place where I once was little better than a servant. I do not forget your kindness, but entreat you to remain; to consider this house your home; to let

me help you and your children as you were once anxious to help me."

He had made his speech, and it was not a bad one; and now he waited to hear what effect it had produced on Mrs. Drewitt.

"Maxwell," she answered, "I always admitted your position in life was not what it ought to have been, until by your own industry and cleverness you made yourself what you are. I always thought your grandfather's will most unjust; and even in this house, from whence my dead husband has so lately been carried, I am not afraid to say that, had he acted more wisely and fairly by his brother, his life would have been a more prosperous one. But," and here Mrs. Drewitt rose, as if she could not find breath to speak sitting—as if in her nervous excitement it was needful for every muscle to be strained, every limb stretched, "my husband did not act unfairly by design, or through any premeditated wickedness. He came honestly into Kincorth, and sure am I in my inmost heart, Maxwell, that you have come dishonestly. I know that for twenty-one years you have kept this end in view; and you have achieved your object so far. When I think of my poor boy—when I think of

Brian"— and as she spoke the tears fell like rain over her altered face—"when I think of how he has worked, of how you set his father against him, of how you sowed dissension between him and Harold, and of how you have destroyed every hope and plan of his life, I feel that if I were to eat your bread it would choke me; that if I were to accept any grace, any favour, at your hands I should be as bad as you."

"What do you think of that, Mr. Pryor, as a civil answer to a kind offer?" asked Maxwell.

"I will tell you by-and-by," replied the Englishman; "meantime I think Mrs. Drewitt will be more composed at Durrow, where she has no old associations, where everything will be fresh and new. She is not capable at present of appreciating your kindness, or in fact of clearly understanding what you say; and as you are going to take up your quarters here to-night, your aunt and cousins will accompany me back to Durrow."

"If they do then," said Maxwell Drewitt, "they shall never return to Kincorth."

"Oh! Kincorth—dear, dear Kincorth," broke out the widow, and she fell on her knees, and burying her head in the sofa pillow, sobbed passionately.

"You had better leave her," suggested Mr. Pryor, and he drew Maxwell out of the room.

"They are a nice comfortable sort of people to have to do with, are not they?" said Maxwell, with a forced laugh, slowly drawing on his left-hand glove, and smoothing every wrinkle out of the kid while he spoke. "There are not many men who would bear having their kindness flung back in their face as I do. What do you think of the family now, Mr. Pryor?"

"I think that they have received a great shock, following on the top of another great shock, and that consequently every allowance ought to be made for them, and for what they say under the circumstances."

"And what do you think about the whole affair—about the will I mean?"

"That it must be very unpleasant for you," was the reply.

"Well, it is: the property is not worth that," and Maxwell snapped his fingers, "only I am glad to have back the old place. If Brian had gone on with his improvements it would soon have come to the hammer."

"I cannot quite agree with you there,"

answered the Englishman. He could see the chestnut waiting for her new master, and he added, "You are going to ride Harold's mare?"

"Harold's, indeed! I really was not aware."

"I thought it was his: did his father not give her to him?"

"He said so," answered Maxwell; "but, on the same principle, Brian might say his father gave him Kincorth."

"Of course; you are right. Then you are not going to confirm your uncle's present?"

"Give a lad like that a mare worth two hundred and fifty guineas? If you have made your money so easily, Mr. Pryor, I have not."

The Englishman did not press the point further. "Good-bye," he said, "I suppose you will not be back before we leave."

"We! Then you really are going to adopt the entire family? Be advised—a widow and three children is no light responsibility. Besides, you ought really to consider *les convenances*."

"What *convenances?*" asked Mr. Pryor, hurriedly.

"Why, the world may say one of two things—either that you are going to marry the widow, who

is only about a year or so older than yourself; or else that you are in love with the daughter. I have long inclined to the latter opinion myself, and I congratulate you on an arrangement which will give you such ample opportunities of winning her young affections."

"I am your debtor, Mr. Maxwell Drewitt."

"Not at all; if you were so, I should be only too proud to be your creditor."

"You are very kind, but I prefer paying my bills as I go on. You have asked me twice within the last ten minutes what I thought of your position. Let me give you my answer now. If you have come into Kincorth honestly, I think we are all dealing very hardly by you; but if you have come into Kincorth dishonestly, then I think you have not had half your deserts. And in either case," added Mr. Pryor, "I must say that I consider your manner unfortunate."

"Our opinions with regard to each other may be identical on the latter point," retorted Maxwell; "but I suppose that need not hinder our being friends in the future as we have been in the past. Good-bye for the present," and he held out his hand.

But Geoffry Pryor refused to take it. He bowed stiffly and walked back across the hall to the breakfast-parlour, where he had left Mrs. Drewitt.

"As you like, my fine fellow," muttered the new owner of Kincorth; "those that win may laugh." But somehow Maxwell Drewitt did not laugh. He looked—while he rode down the avenue and out of the gates, of that property which was now his own for life—as unlike a person who had the remotest intention of laughing as it is possible to conceive.

After all, the cup of prosperity is not entirely sweet. There are an immense number of bitters in the pharmacopœia even of success.

But he had succeeded in annoying Mr. Pryor, that was one great consolation; and if he could have imagined how desperately he had wounded his opponent he would have been better pleased still.

To a man like Geoffry Pryor it does not matter much what the world says; but it matters excessively what his own conscience tells him; and his own conscience told him Maxwell had not spoken altogether falsely, for that he should find it very sweet to have Geraldine living under the same roof as that which covered his own head.

"I must go to Waller's; it is the only way of cutting that knot," he decided; and more determined than ever that, so long as he had a shelter to offer her, Mrs. Drewitt should not remain at Kincorth, he pressed upon her the necessity of packing her things as soon as possible, and of taking her departure before Maxwell returned.

"Your maid could follow with your luggage," he suggested.

"Poor old Nannie was the only maid I could ever boast of," answered Mrs. Drewitt through her tears.

"Well, let Nannie put your things together, and the boys can soon find their own; and I will send Flynn over to Durrow for the car and a light cart. If there are any of the servants you would like to accompany you we can make room for them at Durrow."

"But how should I ever be able to keep servants?" she inquired.

"If you are not able to do so, I will find something for them," he answered.

"If I were to take one or two the rest would think I did not care for them. I had better leave all, I had indeed."

She was right, and Mr. Pryor could not help marvelling how so sensible a woman had never been able to make a wiser man of the owner of Kincorth.

While he went round to the stable-yard to despatch Flynn to Durrow, she called the servants together and told them all what they knew beforehand—that Mr. Brian was heir no longer, that Mr. Maxwell now owned Kincorth and everything in it.

"You must not think," she added, for her sense of justice prevented her saying anything to prejudice the servants against their new master, or leaving anything unsaid which it was right they should know—"you must not think Mr. Maxwell Drewitt is turning us out of Kincorth; on the contrary, he offered me its hospitality for as long as I liked to remain. It is by my own wish I leave the house I have loved so well. ('Ah! hear that, the craythur!' said some one in the rear.) I could not be happy here; and though it is very kind of Mr. Maxwell (dark faces and lowering looks among the men), still I feel it is best for me to avail myself of Mr. Pryor's kindness and go to Durrow till I see what the future may bring forth. It is so

soon—" and Mrs. Drewitt paused to recover herself —"so soon after my dear husband's death, and altogether so sudden and unexpected, that I cannot tell yet where I may go or what I may do; but wherever I am——"

She paused again:—"wherever I am"—but it would not do: she put her handkerchief to her face, and then the women crowded round her weeping and bewailing themselves, and Mrs. Drewitt sobbed out too.

She was like a queen among them—she who had come there so lonely and unwelcomed—and when she said, "You have been my friends; I have loved you all," and held out her hand for each to shake ere she departed, they stooped down and kissed it, men and women alike, and a bitter cry of lamentation arose to the chamber where Brian sat all alone.

He knew right well what was the meaning of it. He knew his mother and he could be but of one mind, and that she meant to leave the house, and leave it at once; but he did not think where she proposed going, and so he descended the staircase and entered the drawing-room, where she and Geraldine and Harold stood, and walked up to her.

"An' here's Masther Brian, ma'am; an' it's himself 'll be the comfort to you from this day forth for ever."

"An' haven't ye yer childer, ma'am? Shure there's nobody living can take them from ye: an' wouldn't him that has got Kincorth give Kincorth to have any one of them for his own?"

"There's a silver lining to ivery cloud."

"But it's us that'll feel it, losing masther and misthress within the week."

"An' it's the good masther he was."

"An' the kind misthress you've been."

"An' the blissin' of God will follow ye; and the prayers of the poor have gone before ye."

"She can't stand it," said Brian, huskily; "think of what she has gone through and let her be quiet. Mother, come with me—mother darling."

He led her through the servants, who made a way for them to pass out, and took her to her own room, where he inquired what she meant to do, what plan she had laid out.

Then he took the management of affairs on himself. He went and asked Mr. Pryor what his mother was legally entitled to carry out of Kincorth, and when Mr. Pryor told him, in strict law,

only the clothes she wore, Brian observed there would be the less packing needful.

"*He* can send them after us if he likes," said Brian, pointing towards Headlands; "but she shall take nothing except what she has a clear right to take."

"And you, Brian?"

"I want to be alone for a while. I will walk over the hills to Durrow."

"Let me walk with you;" and Brian saw that the Englishman was afraid of what he might be meaning to do.

"Trust me," he said; "I would not shoot Maxwell if there were no gallows on earth. I am not going to seek an interview with him—upon my honour I am not;" and Mr. Pryor was satisfied.

"Mamma wants to go all round the grounds, and would like you to go with her," Geraldine came whispering at this juncture. "She wants to go alone with you," the girl added, and Brian went.

Had Mrs. Drewitt been remaining on at Kincorth, I wonder how long a time would have elapsed ere she set foot on lawn, in field, in

garden? But now, on the very day when the husband she had loved was laid in Eversbeg Abbey, she walked about the place bidding to each tree and plant and flower a sorrowful adieu.

Up the glen she went, and over a plank which was thrown across the waterfall. She had been timid about that plank in former days, and afraid to cross it; but now she stepped over without a helping hand. Where the summer-house had once been she stood and looked down on the country, speaking never a word. She plucked a leaf here and another there; she picked up a pebble out of the stream, and pulled a fern and a piece of moss from beside the waterfall. She went into the garden and gathered for herself lavender, and heliotrope, and a sprig of bay, and another of lemon verbena, a morsel of heath, a late-blooming rose, a spray of fuchsia, two or three scarlet geraniums, and a handful of woodruffe, and these she tied all together with a piece of ribbon, and laid aside.

"When I am dead, Brian," she said, "you will find those flowers somewhere among my possessions. You will put them in my coffin. Promise me, my son."

"Mother, mother!" he remonstrated.

"Promise me," she insisted, and he did as she wished.

Thus Agnes Drewitt bade farewell to Kincorth. In her heart she knew she should tread its pleasant lawns, its shady walks, its sunny gardens, no more for ever.

When she drove down the avenue with her children about her to the lodge, where the way was blocked by a crowd eager to do her honour, eager to tell her they sorrowed with her sorrow and sympathized with her distress, she felt that, let who else would, return to Kincorth in triumph, let who else would, come back to dwell in the familiar rooms, to take their rest under those magnificent trees, she might return to Kincorth no more!

CHAPTER XII.

THE HOUR OF SUCCESS.

NEAR the gates of Kincorth Brian separated himself from his mother, and promising to meet her at Durrow, walked back up the avenue towards the house. He had many things to put together—some few presents to make, some last words to speak, ere he went out into the world to push his fortune; and accordingly he retraced his steps slowly up the drive, thinking of the change that twenty-four hours had wrought in his prospects, and considering what it would be best for him to do now. Halfway, Maxwell overtook him, and dismounting, walked with Brian to the house, leading the chesnut, who looked distressed, as though she had been ridden fast and far.

"I am glad to have an opportunity of talking

with you alone, Brian," said Mr. Maxwell Drewitt. "Is there any earthly reason why we should not be friends? why you should leave Kincorth at all?"

"I think there is," Brian answered.

"Will you explain what you mean? Will you explain to me why there should be ill-will between you and me any more than there was between your father and my father?"

"Your father and my father were probably different men to what you and I are," was the reply. "Your father was wilfully disinherited, and he knew why; I am disinherited by an accident, or by a fraud; you can best tell which," and Brian's lip curled.

"You cannot think it other than accidental, surely," said Maxwell.

"What I think cannot signify to you so long as you have got Kincorth," was the reply.

"Well now, Brian, that I have got Kincorth, will you tell me what I am ever likely to make out of it? The mortgages, as you know, are almost equal to its value. It is not a cheap house to keep up. More will be expected from the owner of Kincorth than was ever looked for from the owner of the Headlands. The place will be

an expense to me, not a gain; you must have sense enough to see that yourself."

"Give it to me," said Brian, grimly, "and see if I will complain."

"Why, boy, you could never have made money out of it."

"I should have tried," was the reply. And there ensued a long silence, which Maxwell broke, by saying as they approached the house—

"Shall we be friends?"

"No," Brian answered; "for I mean to put you out of Kincorth, if I can. If I cannot, then I mean to bide my time, and take my revenge. You need not look so black, Mr. Maxwell Drewitt. I shall not shoot you; I shall not come behind you in the dark and smite you under the fifth rib; but I shall find out your weak point and hurt you there. A year or two is nothing; I can wait: when you least look for me I shall be at your side."

"You are mad, Brian," said his cousin.

"Then it is you who have made me so," was the reply.

"Let us be friends."

"I told you no, once; I tell you no, twice.

There are places where even you, Maxwell Drewitt, will be unable to injure me, to hinder my succeeding; and I shall succeed yet; and I shall come back to Kincorth yet. Let me pass, I am not going to steal anything out of the house. It is yours now, I know, but it has not been so for long. Let me pass."

"Can he have found another will?"—that was the thought which crossed Maxwell's mind, and for a moment he stood irresolute. Then he made way, and Brian entered the house.

Before many minutes had elapsed he came down the staircase, with a bunch of keys in his hand.

"Harold's luggage and mine is together, and I will send over for both to-morrow morning. Meantime, if you would like to see that we have taken nothing belonging to you, there are the keys. Take them," he insisted, as Maxwell drew back, and he flung them at his cousin's feet.

"I am going now," the youth said, looking round him with a terrible despair. "I am going now. Have you anything to say to me before I go?"

"Let us be friends."

"You struck me to-day, Maxwell."

"I am sorry for it."

"You pushed me aside at my father's funeral."

"Inadvertently."

"You have got Kincorth."

"Accidentally."

"For years you have been trying to put my father against me; you made him misjudge me towards the last; you tried to frustrate all my efforts for freeing Kincorth."

"I thought I was acting for the best."

"Then," answered Brian Drewitt, "I think I am acting for the best now, when I refuse your friendship; when I say you are a coward and a hypocrite; when I cross this threshold, saying that at peace with you I will never re-enter it."

"Brian, you will repent."

"And so will you."

With which mutual assurances the cousins separated, and while Maxwell took possession of his new home, Brian strode out of the house and took the hill-path leading to Durrow.

He had to pass by the stables on his way through the plantations, and he turned aside to speak to Flynn, who was the last man to leave the yard.

"Mr. Maxwell wants you, I think, Flynn," he said; "and I wish to say good-bye to the horses;

so you can come back here after you have seen him;" and with that Mr. Brian Drewitt thrust a crumpled note into the man's hand, remarking—

"That will pay you for your overtime."

"I don't need it, Masther Brian," said Flynn. "I'd work night and day for you, I would, if working could give you back your own."

"Keep it," returned Brian. "I am not poor—keep it, I can make more; only go—go away," and he crossed the yard and pushed open the stable-door, and went in, closing, but not latching it after him.

"Gently, my lady," said the youth: he had walked up the stable and entered Madcap's loose box. At sound of his voice, the chesnut turned round and whinnied.

Then Brian drew a pistol out of his pocket, looked to the priming, cocked it, and took aim.

At the moment, Madcap put her head against his breast, asking in her mute fashion for the caress to which she was accustomed: finding no caress given, she lifted her head and looked at him with soft and inquiring eyes.

"I cannot do it, Chessy," he said. "I meant to shoot you, but I must leave you for others to ride;

for others to maltreat if they will—my beauty—my pet! It would be greater kindness for me to put it out of anybody's power to do this; but I cannot—I cannot;" and he put his arms round her slender neck, and leaned his head against her shoulder, the chesnut standing still and quiet all the time, as though she had some human comprehension of what was the matter with him.

At last she turned her head, and began rubbing it against his breast as usual. Brian had always petted her more than anybody else, and she in return, though he was not her master, had been wont to follow him about the yard and round the meadows like a dog.

"I must go now, beauty," Brian said, and he stroked her silky coat slowly—slowly. "Good-bye," and thinking there was no one near to see him, he kissed the white star on her forehead, and then stepped back and looked at her soft wondering eyes again.

"Good-bye, Chessy—good-bye," and he walked out of the stall, not knowing that Flynn and his cousin were standing in the next box, which chanced to be vacant, looking on at his leave-taking.

As he went the chesnut turned round in her stall, and followed him to the door. She put her head over the top of it, and watched him, with her great brown sorrowful eyes, out of the stable.

"Hasn't she a face just like a Christian, sir?" asked Flynn, but Maxwell never answered him.

He had come to the yard suspecting his cousin's design the moment Flynn said Mister Brian had told him to go to the house. He had thought to catch the boy doing mischief, and behold! he only saw that leave-taking, which is always so pathetic, between a man and a favourite animal.

Something about the manner of that leave-taking caused Maxwell to walk back to the house slowly and thoughtfully. He had got Kincorth, a valueless property, for which he had paid a tremendous price. The man who once stood between it and him was dead, the man's widow was gone, the man's children were departed likewise, and now as he passed from room to room, he found each in succession desolate and deserted.

He ascended the staircase and entered the chamber he had occupied in the days which were now gone and passed away for ever. He crossed the

bare floor—he threw open the window and looked out.

In the gathering twilight, the mountains seemed frowning upon him, the trees to be sunk in gloom; and that feeling of desperate depression he had felt for the first time as he rode home one night, years and years before, under the moonlight, came upon him once more.

Life was then before him: where was his life now? Half gone — more than half gone — even if he survived to that threescore years and ten beyond which man's strength is but labour and sorrow. The twenty-one years had passed like a watch in the night, like a tale that was told! Twenty more years, and he should be as old as the man whom he had seen laid that day in Eversbeg Abbey.

For twenty-one years he had been scheming, and planning, and plotting, and his schemes had been in the main successful—he had gained wealth, position, houses, and lands.

Suppose he lived for twenty years more, and for twenty to the back of that, and through the whole of the time went on adding house to house, and acre to acre—still the twenty, and the twenty, must

come to an end at last, and where would he be then?

That was Maxwell Drewitt's dark hour: many such had come to him lately; for it does not require a man to have either a very sensitive conscience, or to think much on holy things, to make such considerations strike home to him at times.

On the contrary, as sickness seems most terrible to the strong; as pain seems most dreadful to those who have been exempt from it; as age seems most wretched to the young; as poverty seems most frightful to the affluent—so the very fact of a man rarely taking courage to face this bugbear of our common mortality is sure to make its aspect more unendurable when it forces itself upon him.

Maxwell had heard read that morning, beside his uncle's grave, the words which he knew must one day be read over his own:—

"Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery. He cometh up and is cut down like a flower; he fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay." And now, without in the least knowing that thousands and thousands of years before the same ideas had passed through the soul of one in great distress

and tribulation, the owner of Kincorth, leaning out into the night, and looking away to the lonely hills, was thinking precisely the same thoughts as those to which Job in his anguish gave utterance.

"There is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground; yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant. But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and dryeth up: so man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep."

Friends, oh! friends, is there not something unutterably mournful in the figure of that man standing lonely, lonely as ever, in the room he had left when a young man, so many years before? He had been solitary then, he was solitary now; when he was lying in his grave he could not be more alone than he felt standing there, looking out into the night.

Beyond all that he could have expected the wild

dreams of his youth had met with fulfilment. From the position of a dependent he had raised himself to that of the first landed proprietor in the neighbourhood; from beggary he had risen to wealth; from indigence, to prosperity and consideration. If all Galway were not his, he owned quite enough of the county to make the name of Drewitt a wonder to tourists—a memory in Connemara.

There was not a house whose doors did not fly open at his approach. If he had not effected all he had intended for the people's good—for the people's advancement—that certainly was more their fault than his. He had learned, as he assured Mr. Pryor, that a nation cannot be civilized in a day; that a love of tidiness and of cleanliness, a desire for luxuries, cannot be implanted in one generation, nor yet in two. He had long comprehended that there was the same distinction between the upper and lower classes in Ireland in the nineteenth century as existed between lord and serf in the earlier portions of English history; not to the extent of a power of life and death—not to the extent of a power of oppression, or imprisonment, or disposal of the bodies

of the poor; but the same social difference. The lords lived in profusion, with a certain wasteful magnificence, while their hinds were contented with the coarsest fare. The lords went about in grand attire, while the serfs were clothed meanly. Between the two classes in those days there could have been no more distinction than there is between the rich and the poor to the present day in Connemara; and it was this state of things which Maxwell Drewitt at last declared to himself he was not sent into the world to alter.

"The rice pot to the Hindoo," he was wont to say, "the potato kish to the Irish;" but the meal barrel and the potato kish were both better supplied on the estates belonging to Maxwell Drewitt than on the estates of any other man in West Connemara.

He had no cause to be greatly disappointed on that score; he had done something for his countrymen and countrywomen, and having done as much as he thought possible without their own co-operation, Maxwell rested content. He loved Ireland better than he loved her sons and daughters; but he loved himself better than Ireland.

And now having gained the summit of the hill

of success, he stood on the top looking out into the night a lonely man. Most lonely! Was this what he had bargained for in those days of poverty and struggle? Was this the end he had striven to reach? Was it thus he had expected to feel when that end was compassed? Money—station—health—position: he possessed all these, and yet the man whom he had followed to his grave that morning was not so lonely as he.

There is a story current in Ireland about a traitor, by name Parese, who undertook to give the Castle of Maynooth into the hands of an enemy of the Fitzgeralds. He stipulated for a certain sum of money, but forgot to stipulate also for his life; the consequence of which oversight resulted in the "devil betraying the betrayer," whose head was cut off as soon as the reward was counted out.

Whether this tale be true or false, we need not stop to inquire, seeing how often analogous cases must have come under the observation of all of us; but I think that what happened to Parese happened also in a great measure to Maxwell Drewitt. He had bargained for money and power, and money and power he had, but nothing more.

When the bells that now hang in the tower of

the church of St. Nicholas, in Galway, were being cast, it is related that from far and from near, men and women brought their golden brooches and rings, their precious ornaments and their stores of silver and gold, and threw them in with the iron, to the end that all might be fused together. And it is further stated that the precious metals may be seen shining to this day in the bells, and that those offerings of the faithful have caused their tones to be peculiarly sweet and beautiful.

It is a lovely legend, and all the more lovely because it is so tenderly suggestive, so touchingly pathetic. The men and the women who flocked to the place where the casting went on have passed away, and their names are forgotten on earth; but still the bells peal out the sweet music, still their silver and their gold make the tone fuller, the notes more exquisite.

I cannot help recalling these two stories while I think of Maxwell standing there in the darkness, spite of all his wealth, alone—alone! He had not bargained for happiness, thinking success would insure happiness.

He cast no stores of love into time's furnace on faith that he would receive back, in some shape,

principal and interest, and lo! the dark days were advancing towards him, and there was never a one to take him by the hand and bid him be of good cheer.

For money, he had, like Parese, sold his best friends, deserted the woman who had trusted him, married a wife for whom he did not care; for money he had schemed to ruin his uncle, and when his schemes failed, he had accomplished his purpose by more dishonest means still. Money he had elected to serve—Mammon had been his god, and, as has been cleverly said, cent. per cent. his prophet; but a man cannot serve two masters—a man cannot hoard all his wealth, or else spend it entirely on himself, and still hear God's bells making sweet music in his ears—music that never sounds so sweet as to the sick and weary.

There was a preacher who once undertook to prove that life's voyage would be a pleasant one, even were there no hope of land on the other side, nothing but the long sleep and the cold grave as a finish to each man's story. His theory seemed to be, that there is so much enjoyment in the goodly company, in the lively conversation, in the health-giving breeze, in the witty anecdote, in the

daily work, as to make the journey a desirable one in itself, without any reference to an expected haven; and while the goodly company is around us, while the conversation never flags, while the sky is clear and the body strong, perhaps he may be right. I have known many who seemed to think so. Only, reader, how is it when man has to go below; when he is lying in his narrow berth; when the guests have dropped off one by one; when the voices of the singers are hushed; when the evil days are come and the years draw nigh when he shall say, "I have no pleasure in them;" when the sun and the light, and the stars and the moon be darkened, and the clouds return after the rain—how is it then?

Standing in the gathering night—type of that still deeper night which he would one day have to pass through, Maxwell Drewitt was seized in the hour of his success, in the hour of his victory, with a strange horror—with a frightful dread. It seemed but a day to him since he was young; it would be but a day till he was old, and then——

Maxwell closed the window, and groped his way out of the room. All in darkness, he descended the staircase, and when he reached the

hall, he took his hat, and saying to one of the servants, "You need not wait up for me. I shall not sleep here just at present," walked out of the house, and down the avenue, under the trees, past the porter's lodge—home.

"I do not think I shall go up to Kincorth till you can go with me," he said to his wife, and Lady Emmeline looked at him in amazement.

It was the first time during sixteen years she had heard him express a wish for her companionship, and so much affection astonished her.

Further, instead of kicking her poodle out of his way with a curse, Maxwell, thinking of that scene in the stable of which he could not get rid, stretched his hand towards the creature, and called it by name —Prince—Prince. But Prince, unused like its mistress to such attentions, only crouched behind Lady Emmeline, who, pushing the dog off the sofa, said—

"Go, Prince, there."

"Come here, Prince," added Maxwell, and he made a movement to stroke him; but Prince backed from the proffered caress, and, barking and growling, retreated under the sofa.

"Prince is not accustomed to your noticing him,"

said Lady Emmeline, apologetically, but Maxwell did not seem to hear her words. He was walking up and down the room with his hands buried in his pockets, his head bent down, his face looking stern and thoughtful.

"Has Mrs. Drewitt really left Kincorth?" asked Lady Emmeline after a long pause.

"Yes, they are all gone," he answered.

"Dear, dear; I am very sorry; poor things!"

"I do not see why the devil you should be sorry for them," he said, stopping in his walk; "nor why you should call them poor things. I did not want them to go. Heaven knows, I would much rather they had stayed. And as for their being 'poor things,' they cannot be a great deal poorer than they were; and I suspect Mrs. Drewitt knew pretty well what she was about when she went to Durrow. Pryor is sure to marry Geraldine, and that, you may say, will be a provision for the family."

"How very clever you are, Maxwell," remarked Lady Emmeline, her old face lighted up with admiration. "Who could ever have pieced that all together as you have done? I never should; but now it is as clear as possible. It is not exactly

nice; but still one can scarcely blame her—can one?"

"Blame her! though she has placed me in a most awkward position, I commend her prudence. Candidly, I did not think Mrs. Drewitt had so much sense," and Maxwell looked as he spoke at his wife's face, and wondered with an unutterable astonishment how he ever came to marry such a fright of a woman.

"And Mr. Pryor is so nice, and Geraldine so pretty," said Lady Emmeline.

"The only drawback——" Maxwell began, but he stopped in his speech suddenly and resumed his walk.

"Is what?" inquired his wife.

"I was wrong—there is no drawback," said Maxwell, who did not intend to make any remarks for the future about disparity of age, if he could avoid doing so. He had been thinking of something he meant to ask his wife to do for him, and to compass that object he intended to be civil to her; civil so far as it was in his nature to be towards any one with whom he was thrown in daily communication.

Many a taunt he had flung at her, but he would

try to taunt no more. If she fell into his plan and helped him to carry it out, he would bear with her silliness; he would say nothing to her about their childless hearth—about her rouge—her age—her affectation. He would command his temper and his tongue, and do his best for her, if she would do her best for him.

CHAPTER XIII.

ON THE WAY TO DURROW.

THROUGH the twilight Brian Drewitt pursued his way over the hills to Durrow, keeping as near the sea as the nature of the country would permit.

Instinctively he felt that the waters rolling on the shore, that the plash of the waves which rose to his ears, that the noise of the ocean washing up to the base of the cliffs calmed and comforted him.

When no human being could have quieted his heart, the voices of the night and the murmurs of the sea came round and about him, bringing tranquillity and repose with them.

All his plans had that day been wrecked, all his hopes had foundered. It is no easy matter to realize the full extent of such a misfortune in a

minute, and Brian sometimes caught himself wondering about the leases, about the grass land, about how soon the oats would be fit to reap, even while he knew, in a dull, stupid kind of way, that the leases, the grass lands and the oats could never more signify anything to him.

When we go out of the light we find it difficult to see clearly in the darkness; and after the flare of excitement in which he had been living all the day, Brian discovered that the intense stillness, the utter lull of human passions and human wishes around him, prevented any distinct thoughts or plans taking shape in his mind.

For a time everything seemed mixed and confused. He walked on like a person in a dream, now thinking of one thing, now of another, until at last, as he drew near Durrow, every incident of the past week came back to his memory clearly and separately. When it did so, Brian Drewitt threw himself down on the grass by the edge of the cliff —lay with his face touching the cool earth—thinking of his past, tracing out his future.

He thought of his father; of the coldness that had come between them; of the way in which he had worked and struggled to free Kincorth; of

how his endeavours had fretted his parent; of how his motives had been misunderstood, his intentions doubted; of how Harold had been preferred to him; of how Harold had been everything, he nothing—and Brian's heart, as he lay and considered these things, became a perfect well of bitterness.

But then, again, he remembered how his father's grey head had lain on his breast, how his father's last action on earth had been to stretch out his arms towards him, and Brian's heart was softened, and grew exceeding tender and sorrowful within him.

And the waves came rolling on the shore, slowly and gently, and the sea washed the base of Durrow Cliffs, and it seemed as though he could hear the voices of the great waters coming nearer and nearer, talking to him, mourning with him, as if they too had suffered.

He recollected what his father had said about having left everything to him. He repeated to himself the warning he had received years and years before. He called up every word and look of Maxwell's, and then suspicion became certainty. Kincorth *had* been procured by fraud;

though by what fraud Brian was unable to imagine. Which idea brought him almost to the end of his reflections on the past, by causing him to wonder what he should do in the future.

There, however, all seemed vague and shadowy. He could not yet tell what he ought to do. He had no idea on what course his mother would decide. He must talk the matter over with Mr. Pryor; and having settled so much, Brian rose from the ground, and walked onwards for a little distance towards the house.

Then he turned and went back to the cliff once more, where he sat down and listened dreamily to the song which the ocean was murmuring so far below. Heaven knows what the waves whispered to him, what message the soft wind brought to his soul—I only can tell, that with hands clasped over his head, with his face bowed forward on his knees, Brian hearkened to the sermon which nature preached to him that night, taking, as we all do, his own construction out of it.

We have, most of us, some memory of this kind—some scene that, so often as we think of any great trouble, immediately recurs to our memory.

With one it is a forest glade, where the sun-

beams pour through the branches and make bright patterns and golden traceries on the turf beneath; with another, it is a bare expanse of country, upon which the winter afternoon is darkening down; with a third, it is some river reach, where trees overhang the waters, and the grass looks green and beautiful on the banks, and a boat or two is gliding past; while a fourth sees in imagination the city streets all lighted up, and full of people hurrying—hurrying away.

But sadder to my mind than all, is the memory of a sunset watched from a lonely seashore; a sunset seen over a waste of angry waters, of roaring billows; or a night-watch on the deck of a vessel, while the stormy waves are lashing themselves to fury all around; or such a vigil as that kept by Brian Drewitt, during which his soul seemed to go out of him, and stand on the shore below, greeting the white foam as it was thrown upon the shingle, and asking the waters, questions that might only be fitly put if the ocean washed, on one side, the sands of time, but on the other the headlands of Eternity.

His life—it was all before him then, to make what he would out of. His life—he had reached

that point in the highway of existence where his father had once stood, where Maxwell had once stood, where all those who have grown to man's estate must surely have paused for a moment to survey their road. His life—what a much grander thing life would have seemed to this youth had he looked out at it from the windows of Kincorth instead of from the cliffs of Durrow! And yet, to my thinking, it was in his power to make as good a thing of his existence one place as another; unencumbered by a mortgaged estate, as burdened by it; free to go where he liked, instead of being chained to one spot, and forced to make his fortune there. For he determined to make his fortune. He resembled Maxwell in that respect, and he resembled him, unfortunately, in another—viz., in his resolution to win back Kincorth.

"Earth fighting for earth, earth struggling after earth, earth losing its youthfulness, its innocence, its light-heartedness to gain earth!" Did the wind and the waves utter no such plaint as this in his ears, as he sat listening to their voices? Had the night, which had spoken so plainly to Maxwell, nothing to tell Brian?

Life, oh! life—who is there that has lived, who

would not go back and try to make a better of it if he could? Who, when the last day comes, does not think that, if he might be permitted to retrace his steps, to stand once more on the threshold of existence, his prayer would be to wash his hands in innocency, and to keep himself unspotted from the world?

Stained and soiled, torn and defiled, who does not wish that he could commence wearing the fleshy garments of our poor mortality once again, fondly believing he could keep them out of the mire, and bring them almost white to the end of the journey? And yet, as the instrument can give forth no music till its strings have been played upon—as we can never tell the quality of the gold till it comes forth from the furnace—as we know little of our own capabilities till our strength has been tested and tried in the battle-field of the world—so there is no man, or woman either, who dare say that, if return were possible, a better working out of the great problem would be probable also.

And for these reasons I do not say that Brian would have passed through the fire scatheless had he laid out a different course to travel; though I

believe it would have made all the difference had he decided to pursue his onward path without permitting hatred to gain dominion over him—without letting envy and malice and all uncharitableness find lodging in his young heart.

But yet it was scarcely Brian's fault that he disliked his cousin so intensely. He had drunk in that enmity with his mother's milk; he had fed on it from his youth upward. Mrs. Drewitt was the one to blame here. She had been pleased to see Brian at war with Maxwell. She had done her best to make her son hate the man who desired her son's inheritance: for, like all weak people, in striving only to put Brian on his guard against his cousin's machinations, she had overdone her part, and caused her boy to look with suspicion on every act of his relative—to search for some hidden meaning under every word—to listen greedily to stories concerning Maxwell's wickedness, Maxwell's avariciousness, Maxwell's heartlessness — to consider the owner of the Headlands, in fact, as the *bête noir* of the county, and to believe that honey could as soon be bitter as any act of Maxwell Drewitt's good.

Add to this the well-meant warning which he

had received, and his own experience of his cousin, and you will see that, unless Brian Drewitt made up his mind to leave Ireland entirely, to forget Kincorth and Connemara, and Maxwell, and to start on a new life which should have no sort of connexion with the past, there could be nothing between the pair but war to the death for ever.

In his hour of triumph it might be that Brian would hold out his hand to Maxwell, and contemptuously offer him friendship as his cousin had offered friendship to him; but even that was scarcely likely; for in his hates Brian was more sincere than his cousin. He was a staunch friend, an open enemy; and if his constitution, his education, his temperament, his country, and his misfortunes, all tended to render him implacable, who may blame him?

It is not so easy to turn the other cheek as those who have never received a blow on one, would have us believe. We are all rather more apt to fight for our coat than to bestow our cloak on the thief also. What man is there that, having Brian Drewitt's strength of character, would venture to say he could always keep clear of that

dangerous frontier ground where strength becomes sin?

Nevertheless, I would it were possible for me to record that the voices of the night, the murmurs of the sea, the light wind that came down from among the tops of the hills, taught Brian a different lesson; but alas! when the youth arose he was the same as when he sat down; death had not softened him, suffering had not subdued him, nature and silence had no power to change him.

When in the after years he returned to Ireland and sat on the cliffs of Durrow, listening to the plash of the waves, to the sighing of the wind, he would have given all his wealth, all his influence, aye, and his life also, if he could but have kept that sorrowful vigil once again, and learned a different lesson out of it—if he could but have started on his journey through the world resolved never to look back, but always forward.

Through the years, the sea ebbed out, and the sea flowed in; through the years, in storm and tempest, in calm and sunshine, the waves stole up on the sands, and kissed the feet of the great rocks lovingly; through the years, the shore-birds built their nests, and fed their young, and winged their

flight far out over the ocean, and then came back, with pinions weary and drooping, to the land; through the years, the fishermen dried their nets, and put out their lines, and pushed off their boats; through the years, the ships went by, staggering among the billows, or with their white sails glistening and shining, sped onwards to their destined haven; through the years, the sun set, and the darkness drew on, and the great hills hid themselves behind the curtains of the night; through the years, the deeps never ceased calling unto one another, now softly, now in louder tones; through the years, the youth who had once sat and listened to them was a stranger in a strange country, working for his daily bread.

He did not know as, at last, he walked away from the edge of the cliff, that it would be necessary for him to leave Connemara; on the contrary, he had some vague idea of renting a cottage for his mother, near Analore, and of trying to make his fortune there. He knew that with worse land Maxwell had done well, and although there was no Lady Emmeline for him to marry, yet he thought that, with Mr. Pryor's help, he could, perhaps, still weather the storm.

"I must talk to him," thought Brian, and went up to Durrow House, where Mrs. Con met Brian in the hall, and informed him that mother and brother and sister were all gone bed, "tired out" as Jenny expressed it.

"And Mr. Pryor?" Brian asked.

"He is staying at Eversbeg with Mr. Waller.

"What's that for?" inquired the youth.

"He said he thought Mrs. Drewitt would be m comfortable if she felt she had the house to h self," was the reply. And then Mrs. Connor w on to ask what he would have to eat, and brou in supper herself, and made the boy a cup strong coffee. Look at her as she sits in candlelight—would you think that from her e had ever fallen such passionate tears, that had ever pleaded so vehemently, that she had e loved so unavailingly, as you can remember have been the case?

Those calm, kind eyes look now as thou sorrow had never dimmed them. Away in girlhood, far, far back, lies the dream, and grief, and the sorrow, and the sin.

To such natures, to such gentle, loving wom time is very kind; he refuses to wear channels

their cheeks, to draw lines across their foreheads, to take away their beauty, or to destroy their power of conferring happiness upon others; and thus Jenny was still pleasant to look upon — pleasant, though she was young no more; though the flush of her girlish loveliness had faded off he cheeks, though the warm brightness of her hair was dulled, though the years that had come and gone could not come and go without leaving traces behind them, still Jenny was pretty still, and Brian, who liked her greatly, found her face pleasant, as I have said, to look on.

Had she done wrong to marry? Jenny's nature, facile as it was, had yet set itself resolutely against marrying or giving in marriage; but time, as it passed by, worked wonders, and Connor's patient devotion and enduring constancy prevailed at last. All were dead who knew her secret—all save Maxwell and one other; and so, after ten years, she married, and came, as we have seen, with her husband to take charge of the great house at Durrow.

Mr. Pryor's agency was of course immense promotion to Connor. There was a wonderful difference between living at Durrow Park and in

Duranmore Cottage. Altogether, the Connors were rising people, greatly loved by the poor, and much appreciated by their employer; and Brian could not help thinking, while Jenny coaxed him to eat, and set dainty viands before him, that the Englishman had been fortunate; that no man and no woman could have been found in the length and breadth of Connemara likely to suit him better.

For many a day Jenny and Brian had been friends. She it was who, seeing the boy idling away his time, sought opportunity and occasion to give him the caution he spoke of to Mr. Pryor; and now, when all his struggles, all his efforts had proved of no avail, Mrs. Connor spoke tearfully of the sorrow that had come upon them, and told the son how deeply she grieved for his mother.

"You must be a good boy to her," she said; "you must make up to her for what she has lost."

"Yes," answered Brian, "and I mean to try and give her back what she has lost."

"You cannot give her back the dead," Mrs. Connor remarked, sorrowfully.

"No; but I may give her back Kincorth," the youth replied.

"Mr. Brian," began Jenny, "since ever I came

to Duranmore I have heard of Kincorth—heard of it as a bone of contention, as a place about which there had been quarrels, and broils, and heart-burnings, generation after generation. But for Kincorth, maybe your cousin might have been a better man: not that I have any reason to speak ill of him," she went on hurriedly; "for though I am afraid he did put Timothy out of Mr. Waller's agency, still he has stood his friend since, and he has been very kind to Dennis; but still everybody knows, unless by chance his wife, that Mr. Maxwell has not been a good man, which I think he might only for Kincorth——"

"How do you make that out, Mrs. Connor?" asked Brian, pushing away his plate as he spoke.

"You are not eating a bit," said Jenny, piteously.

"Never mind me," answered the young man. "You were speaking about Maxwell: how do you think Kincorth made him what he is?"

"Why, this way," she replied. "He always thought himself wronged, you know, and it is not for anybody to say, Mr. Brian, that your grandfather did the thing that was right when he passed by his own eldest son and left all to your father.

Do you think, Mr. Brian, it would have been fair for Mr. Drewitt to cut you out for Master Harold? Would it, now?" and Jenny's voice grew quite earnest and pathetic as she pleaded the cause of the man she had once loved too well.

"Putting it in that way, Mrs. Connor, I must agree with you," he answered; "but then it was not with Maxwell a question between brother and brother, but between uncle and nephew. If George Drewitt had been bitter about the matter, I must say his feelings would have seemed to me perfectly natural, and if Harold had superseded me, perhaps I should have felt angry too. That, however, would have been no reason why my son should feel himself injured. There is no just cause why Maxwell should have imagined Kincorth belonged of right to him."

"Yes, there was, Mr. Brian," she persisted. "Your father said he would never marry, and then he did marry. He promised to be a father to his brother's children, and then——"

"Mrs. Connor, he was buried to-day; let what he did and what he left undone he buried with him," Brian interrupted.

"I beg your pardon," she said, humbly, and the

tears came up into her eyes as she saw how hurt the lad was. "He was a good man and a true, even if he did leave many a thing undone he ought to have seen to; and all I meant to say was, that as Kincorth has been a curse and a snare to your cousin, I hope and pray, Mr. Brian, you will never let it be either to you. Sure there's many a place as nice in Ireland. To my fancy, this house, with its look-out over the sea, is heartsomer than those woods and mountains"—poor Jenny! she shivered as she spoke—"and I think Dennis is right in saying you are better without so large a property so heavily mortgaged. And, indeed," finished Jenny, "if I was a young gentleman I would not stay in these parts at all. I would go to England, and see the world, and make money, and come back here maybe for a month or two in the year, as Mr. Pryor does, but no longer. For many and many a day before I was married I used to wish I could go away. I did—I did."

"I have not a notion what I shall do yet," Brian answered, while he took another cup of coffee from her. "There is one thing, however, I do know—that wherever I go I shall always feel grateful to you for making me what I am. But for you I

do not think I should have been fit for anything; and now I do not feel afraid of turning out into the world to earn my bread."

"I told you before, Mr. Brian, that your mother had been my friend once in a time of bitter trouble, and that if at any hour of the day or night I could serve her or hers I would get up to do it. You have no call to feel grateful to me. There is nothing I could do for her, God knows, that would be half enough—not half."

"I cannot fancy your ever having had a trouble, Mrs. Connor," said the lad. She was the same in middle age as she had been in youth, a woman who took men's fancies, to whom it came easy and natural for them to talk. "You look as if you never could have known a care."

"Do I?" and she dropped her head forward for a moment on her hands. "There are few who come to my time of life," she went on, "that have not met trouble; but there are few who, when in trouble, find such a friend as I did in your mother. If I could have died to keep this grief from her, Mr. Brian, I would have done it. You may think that strange now, having both Dennis and the children to value my life for; but I would, and it is

because I love her, and because I love you for her sake, that I bid you quit caring for Kincorth—that I want you to make her quit caring for it too."

Brian turned away. He could not bear to think of his mother dependent even for a shelter on the kindness of friends, on the courtesy of strangers.

For himself it would not have mattered, but for her—

That was the keystone of the lad's character; that was what had made a man of him, whilst in years he was yet a boy—love for her—love for the mother who had not been true to her first allegiance, but who had loved two other babies since, and her last child, Harold, most of all.

"What am I to do?" he asked after a pause; "how can I make her cease caring for her home, for the place to which she came a wife, which she has left a widow? Tell me, Mrs. Connor," he added, "what made you think so many years ago that Maxwell was determined to have Kincorth; what induced you to warn me; I should like to know that now."

"Well, then, you cannot know," she replied. taking one of the candles off the table; "for I shall not tell you. If I had to do it again, I

am not sure that I should act as I did then, though I meant my warning for your good;" and with that Jenny stretched out her hand a little hesitatingly towards Brian, who stooped and kissed it as though she had been a queen. As he did so Jenny tore her hand away and broke out crying hysterically.

"Have I offended you, Mrs. Connor?" he said, standing abashed at his boyish gallantry; which was no impertinence, but an act of pure, and honest homage, and liking. "I am very sorry; I never meant to vex you. Forgive me—pray, forgive!"

"Forgive!" she cried; "what have I to forgive? only, Mr. Brian, don't do that again—don't. And may God bless—and may God keep you!"

Having completed which intelligible sentence Mrs. Connor left the room, only turning back at the door to suggest that Brian should accompany her and see the apartment which had been prepared for him.

"Try to get some sleep," were her parting words; and worn out in body and in mind, Brian followed her advice, and was soon forgetful alike of past, present, and future.

CHAPTER XIV.

ANOTHER DIFFICULTY.

"I HAVE been considering the suggestion you made about Analore, Brian," Mr. Pryor said one morning, a fortnight after Mr. Drewitt's funeral; "but I should not advise you to commence operations there."

"Why not?" asked Brian. He had been over to Analore, and seen the foundations built up of the house his father had intended for his residence, and had drawn the granite for some twenty years before. "I think a good deal might be made of it, and with a comparatively small outlay, too. The land is very fair—fair, of course I mean, for Connemara; and my mother would be only too glad to let me do the best I could with it."

"That I supposed; but the reason I object to

your doing anything with Analore is, that it would scarcely answer your purpose, to spend your youth, money, and time in reclaiming another person's property. To farm land is a very different affair from reclaiming it."

"But my mother's interests and mine are identical. What is best for her must be best for me; and if I reclaim Analore it will be quite as much to the advantage of all of us as of one."

"We need not discuss that question," answered Mr. Pryor, "since it has nothing to do with the matter. What I mean is this: Analore only belongs to your mother for life; and though I trust she will stay with us till her hair is white, still you would not care to plough and drain and sow and plant for your cousin's benefit."

"He has nothing to do with Analore. It will surely belong to me—or to all of us after——"

"Your mother's death. No, Brian, it will not; and it is very lucky that before you began to delve and dig I looked into her settlement. I cannot imagine how any lawyer could overlook the probability of her having a family; but that it has been overlooked is certain. Analore belongs to your mother for life, and to Maxwell afterwards.

It would have belonged to you had your father died intestate. Unless your father were swamped with debt at the time of his marriage, and that some pressure was brought to bear upon him, the whole affair is inexplicable; but no one can alter the wording now, and it is for this reason I say you had better do nothing with Analore; because, in the first place, you would be spending your strength on another man's property; and, in the second, you would — supposing any one advanced money on the place—have to insure your mother's life to secure the lender against loss."

"Beaten," said Brian, "at every turn;" and the pair walked on a step or two in silence.

"You will not tell my mother," were the next words spoken.

"Why not? I think it is much better for your mother to understand exactly how you are situated," replied Mr. Pryor.

"Harold and Geraldine?" Brian said; and the Englishman understood that he meant it would pain Mrs. Drewitt to know they would be totally penniless.

"I have been down with Neill," Brian went on; "but he can tell me nothing about the missing

will. He says he gave it back to my father himself; but that he has some impression the will was returned to his office; that is, he says, he remembers my father making some mention of either having left it with Ryan—who was then Neill's clerk—or of his having intended to do so."

"Rather vague," remarked Mr. Pryor.

"Then I went to Ryan. 'Upon my word, Mr. Brian,' he said, 'if I knew where that will was I would tell you; but Mr. Drewitt never gave it back to me.'

"'Mr. Neill thinks my father said something to him about having returned it.'

"'Burned it—depend upon it that was what he said.'

"'But why should he burn the one and not the other?' I inquired.

"'My opinion is,' he said, 'that he forgot all about the other, he was so mighty keen on, just at that time, aye, and indeed for long after you thought he had done with Mr. Neill, considering how he could leave your brother independent of you, that it is not for me, or you, or anybody to say what he did or what he did not do, what he

thought or what he did not think.' And then what do you think he proposed?" asked Brian.

"I have not the remotest idea."

"He offered to lend me five hundred pounds to work Analore. I asked him if it was Maxwell's; but he said every penny of it was his own that he had made by hard work. 'I tried to keep it, thinking my sister might want it some day,' he added; 'but if you have it, she can ask for it should she need it, and it may be of use to you now.'"

"Well, Brian?"

"Well, Mr. Pryor, I refused it, of course; but wasn't it good of him? As I came home, I called again on Mr. Neill, and told him what Ryan said. 'It is very possible,' was all I could get out of him. Then I inquired if my father had been with him after the mortgage was transferred, and he said, 'Yes, often.' 'About leaving Harold independent of me,' I inquired, and Mr. Neill nodded. So I am beaten there again, you see—beaten again."

"What do you think of doing now?" asked Mr. Pryor.

"Of trying my old scheme. I should like to get a situation and endeavour to push my way."

"Right; you cannot do better than adhere to that resolution."

"Dan Glynn offers, as you know, two hundred and fifty pounds a year for Analore. I do not think, if I am not to farm it, that we can do better."

"Perhaps not. What does Mr. Dan Glynn expect to make out of it?"

"Potheen, I suspect," said Brian, laughing; "but does that signify to us?"

"Not in the least, if he pays his rent; and at any rate it will be much less trouble to look up one man than twenty or thirty tenants. He will not turn the present occupiers out?"

"They are only occupiers of the ground, you know," replied Brian; "there is but one hut on the fifteen hundred acres, and that has the roof off it. Glynn, however, will not send any of them adrift. He will keep them all to help."

"And now, with regard to this plan of your mother's about living in Dublin? Do you not think she had better stay on for a year, at any rate, at Durrow? The house is there, and empty, and——"

"I think she would be happier away," Brian interrupted. "In a house of her own, no matter

how small, she would feel more settled than she could ever do at Durrow; and besides, Mr. Pryor, there is Harold—we must get him away from Connemara, at all hazards."

"He would be better away certainly, and he must do something to earn his living; but, Brian, promise me now—promise faithfully you will not encourage this notion of Mrs. Drewitt's about going to law: she has not an inch of ground to stand upon, and it would be beggary. You have no idea how soon law runs away with money; and she could about as soon overturn Bennobeola, as put your cousin out of Kincorth now."

"Not even if that codicil were proved to be a forgery?"

"How could it be proved such?" asked Mr. Pryor; but Brian remained silent, and the barrister went on.

"I will be perfectly frank with you in this matter. I believe that codicil to be a forgery. I thought so the moment I heard it read. I thought it because of many trivial circumstances I had noticed previously. But you could never convert a jury to the same opinion; it would be waste of time, of money, and of patience to attempt such a

thing. The solicitor who made the original will, and who, it is supposed, added the codicil, has been paralyzed these six years, and has now lost all power of speech. The witnesses are dead. It is the distance of time, you see, that is so much against us. In law, the codicil is perfectly regular, and what is worse, perfectly natural. Mr. Neill explains the absence of another will; and we have no reason to suppose that Mr. Neill speaks otherwise than truthfully. As for your father's talk on his death-bed about having left the place to you, the first question would be, was he delirious at all during his last illness? and what could Sheen answer but that he frequently wandered? It is quite one thing, you see, to be satisfied oneself, and quite another to satisfy a jury. For which reasons, take my advice, and leave Kincorth to its fate. After all, the estate is not worth the trouble. Your father did not leave it as he got it."

Brian winced. No one let him imagine Maxwell had secured so great a prize as he wanted to believe.

"You will go out into the world," went on Mr. Pryor, "and make your fortune, and forget all about Kincorth, as I have forgotten all about my

disappointment when I was beaten at Duranmore before you were born. We will get you something to do, and you shall do it, and be a rich man yet; richer than Maxwell, perhaps, and much happier, we will hope."

Having uttered which sanguine expectation, Mr. Pryor mounted his horse, and without asking Brian to accompany him, rode straight to Duranmore. The first person he went to was Mr. James Butler, with whom he had a long and confidential chat. Having put up his horse at the "Marsden Arms," he walked from The Retreat to Mr. Neill's office in Duranmore, and satisfied himself Mr. Neill, at any rate, was not one of the conspirators. From Mr. Neill's office he crossed over to Mr. Ryan's, and after taking the chair that was nervously handed to him, he commenced the conversation by thanking the lawyer for his friendly offer to Mr. Brian Drewitt, "about which offer," he added, "I have come to speak to you."

"Indeed! it is very kind," and Mr. Ryan looked as though he would have liked to skulk round the corner of the next street and got a glass of whiskey before proceeding to business.

"Not at all; it is only my duty. I am quite

certain when you made so liberal a proposal that you were not aware of the actual position of affairs regarding Analore, and a five hundred pound legacy is not one which it is safe to jeopardize. Uncles do not die every day — do they, Mr. Ryan?" added the barrister, mercilessly following every thought which was passing through his listener's mind.

"He is considering now whether he told Brian it was a legacy," thought Mr. Pryor; while Mr. Ryan answered, vaguely, "That they did not indeed."

"And most probably, if anything went astray with this five hundred, you have no further expectations from your relatives?"

"None, sir, none—he was the last;" and Mr. Pryor wondered whether Mr. Ryan had any idea of weeping.

"That is precisely what I thought: you have got five hundred pounds to lend, but you have not got five hundred pounds to lose. Analore is not a desirable property, therefore, for you to risk anything upon, since Mrs. Drewitt has no power of mortgaging it."

"What do you mean, sir?—what do you mean?"

and Mr. Pryor saw at once that his suspicion about Ryan being mixed up in this matter also, was unfounded.

"Precisely what I say. Mrs. Drewitt has only a life interest in Analore. At her death it reverts to Maxwell Drewitt."

"And the children?"

"Have not a sixpence in the world."

"The Lord help them!" exclaimed Mr. Ryan.

"He had need," answered the other, a little bitterly, "for it would seem that they are not likely to get much help from man. Mr. Ryan," he went on, "probably you know the mystery of that marriage settlement—of course nothing can make a better or a worse of it now—but as a simple matter of curiosity, I should like greatly to know how such an instrument came to be drawn."

"I was not Mr. Maxwell's solicitor then, sir. I had nothing to do with him then at all, I assure you, sir."

"Of course not; and that is the reason why I ask you for information on the subject—as a mere matter of curiosity."

"I do not know anything about it, sir."

"Are you quite certain? Was no pressure put on Mr. Drewitt?"

"There might have been: if there were it wasn't by me. I was only a beginner then. I had no good clients at all."

"Nor any five hundred pound legacies, we may suppose, Mr. Ryan," said the other, with a smile. "I hope you are getting good interest."

"I—I haven't put it out yet—I have it in hand."

"Then your amiable relative has died recently, I presume?"

"Within the last three months."

"What a strange people you Irish are!" remarked the other, rising to depart. "You get a five hundred pound legacy, offer to lend it to a mere lad on no sufficient security, and still grudge the expense of a hat-band to prove how sincerely you deplore the dead!"

The two men were standing and their eyes met. In a moment Mr. Pryor knew that what he had suspected was true; and Mr. Ryan knew the Englishman was in possession of his secret. Then Mr. Pryor said good-morning, and was going away, but the other detained him.

"For God's sake, Mr. Pryor," he said, laying a

hand on his shoulder, "never mention what you are now thinking to any one. He would kill me, he would. If ever you hear of my being found dead by the roadside, with a bullet through me, you will know whose bullet it is; though as likely as not some innocent man may be hung for the murder."

"Why do you not leave the country?"

"I will if you drive me to it," was the significant answer.

"Mrs. Drewitt intends to contest the will," remarked Mr. Pryor.

"Does she?—then I wish her well out of her troubles," replied Mr. Ryan. "If need were, he'd take it from court to court for twenty years. She has not an inch of ground; you must see that yourself. There is some law place in London that they say it is as bad for a man to get into as for a cat to go through hell without her claws. Well, Mrs. Drewitt will find going to law with her nephew as bad as that, or worse."

"And yet you have been his friend for twenty years?"

"Have I?—more fool Timothy Ryan; that is all I have got to say: but friend or no friend can

make no difference about Mrs. Drewitt. You can just tell her in confidence, out of your own mind as it were, that those who sup with the devil need to have a long spoon."

The notion tickled the barrister's fancy, and he laughed outright.

"I think Mrs. Drewitt would be greatly surprised if I did," he said.

"Surprised or not, it is the truth I'm telling you; but I would not tell it to you if himself wasn't safe in Dublin at this blessed minute."

"If he is in Dublin, he is in Duranmore as well," answered Mr. Pryor. "I see his chesnut mare at the door, and I see him throwing the reins to his groom."

"Lord save us! I think he is the devil," murmured Ryan, nervously shuffling among his papers. "Good-morning, sir — good-morning," he added aloud as his visitor reached the door.

"I beg your pardon," said the owner of Kincorth, who was entering the office as the Englishman left it; "your most obedient, Mr. Pryor," and he almost swept the floor with his hat, his mocking bow was so low and deferential.

Without answering him by a word, Mr. Pryor

bowed in acknowledgment and passed out, while Maxwell walking straight up to Ryan, took him by the arm.

"What brought him here?" said the great man, looking his accomplice full in the face, as if expecting him to falter in his reply.

But desperation gave Ryan courage. "He came to inquire about Mrs. Drewitt's settlement."

"What about it?"

"She has it only for her lifetime, with no remainder to her children. He seemed to think I knew all about it, but I did not. I told him it was the first I had heard of the matter."

Maxwell dropped his hold of Mr. Ryan's arm, and leaning over the back of a chair, indulged in a long low whistle of delight.

"Better and better," he said. "I did not know that either, Ryan. I did not," he repeated, noticing a look of incredulity on the lawyer's face. "Do you imagine I have had time to read over every paper concerning the property since I came into possession of it? No such thing. I shall find plenty to pay, I expect, when I do take that trouble. But if this should prove to be correct, we may as well make her an offer for Analore.

You can write on chance, Ryan, and tell her she shall have three hundred a-year for Analore if she likes the offer; or should she prefer to sell her life interest, I will take the place off her hands.

"When shall I write, Mr. Drewitt?"

"To-day, if you choose—yes, better do it at once, for I should like to have Analore," answered Maxwell.

Acting upon which suggestion, Ryan penned a polite epistle to Mrs. Drewitt, who at once declined the proposal.

"Having already let Analore," she finished.

"Well, it cannot be helped," sighed Maxwell; "and, besides, it is only for her life."

"Only for her life!" echoed back some mocking fiend within him: "she is not more than two years older than you! Only for her life!—you may be dead before her; and then, to whom will you leave Kincorth, and the Headlands, and Cherryfield, and the property in the Joyce country, and Analore?"

Maxwell had decided that point. There was a boy finishing his education at a very select school in the county Wicklow, whom he meant to make his heir, whom he intended to send to one of the

English universities and bring up in the way he should go.

There was a boy to inherit—but alas! that could not make the idea of "passing away" at all more endurable to the man, who, though he had no fear of God, had yet an intense horror of death.

CHAPTER XV.

HAROLD IN TROUBLE.

It was summer once again: summer twelve months after the events recorded in the last few chapters, and Mrs. Drewitt and Brian, and Harold and Geraldine, were living far away from Duranmore, far beyond the Connemara Alps, far beyond sound of the great ocean that washes the headlands of the "wild west."

Brian had got a situation in Dublin, which however necessitated frequent absences from home. He was working hard, and giving great satisfaction to his employers; and Mrs. Drewitt, who had greatly crippled her income by feeing lawyers and running after all manner of people who advised her to dispute her husband's will, resided with Harold and Geraldine in a small house in the outskirts of Dublin.

From whence Harold walked into the city every morning, and sat at a desk from nine o'clock till four; an amusement he was never weary of grumbling about; while his mother, likewise, never wearied in commiserating him for it.

In the present, as in the past, it was Harold she pitied, Harold she loved; it was the bold-eyed, bright-faced boy she clung to—her youngest born—the Benjamin of her life to her!

Such likings are natural, perhaps; but they do not generally tend to make matters pleasanter in the family circle, and perhaps it was quite as well that Brian's occupation took him much from home, as otherwise he might have had less patience than was the case with Harold's repinings—with Harold's conduct.

For Harold was the same in Dublin as he had been in Connemara—wild, reckless, dissipated. His acquaintances were none of the most desirable, his life none of the most regular; but still the mother would not see—the mother would not believe.

He was her darling, and nothing it was in his power to do could make him otherwise. When he

found she came to meet him in the summer afternoons, he walked by a circuitous route home; when he found she sat up for him at night, he came home early, went to bed with the rest of the household, and then stole down in his stocking-soles, with his boots in his hand, and let himself out, taking the door-key with him.

Of course their servant—who was often unfastening the shutters when Harold reappeared—knew of these pranks; but she had never the heart to tell his mother.

And if she had told Mrs. Drewitt, what difference could it have made? His mother had no influence over him — none whatever. He had nothing to say but "I will leave the house," or "I will go and ask food and lodging from Maxwell," and she was silent at once.

Whenever Maxwell came to Dublin, which was not seldom, Harold always dined with him, and always came back reeling drunk.

"Told him—I—bore—no grudge—welcome to—Madcap—poor—old—girl," the young rascal would hiccup out, and when induced to go to bed, he invariably did so under protest, retiring from view between the sheets in his boots, coat, waistcoat

and trousers, and refusing to let go of Mary's hand—Mary was their maid-of-all work—until she promised to call him early.

"Don't f—get, Marish. If you're waking—you know—call me early, Marish dear."

And indeed had it not been for Mary's repeated calls, Harold could hardly have kept his situation so long as was the case.

"Damn business—curse work!" I think that was the refrain of almost every sentence Harold Drewitt uttered for some months after starting in the world on his own account, and Mrs. Drewitt listened sympathetically, and would oftentimes confide to Mary, the maid-of-all-work before honourably mentioned, the fact, "that she thought that office was killing her poor boy—he looked so pale, and ill, and thin since he left the country."

Mary had her own opinions, which, seeing Master Harold was the lamb without blemish in his mother's eyes, she wisely kept to herself.

But even the fondest parent cannot remain blind for ever, and accordingly there came a time when Mrs. Drewitt, instead of pitying Harold, went up to her own room and wept; when she prayed him not to go to the hotel where Maxwell stopped

while in town; when she entreated him to remember that by business he must live, and that to live he must work.

"Look at Brian," she would remark, and the injudicious speech invariably made Harold shrug his shoulders, and declare Brian "never was fit to be anything better than a horse in a mill, or a counting-house drudge, or a pack-horse which he is," finished Harold.

"Now Harold, do not say such things of Brian!" Geraldine would exclaim, her cheeks all a-glow; and then Harold was wont to laugh and declare—

"Oh! we all know what makes you so much in love with business; don't we, mamma?" For which speech Mrs. Drewitt invariably pulled Master Harold up.

In her heart, the mother did not like the way in which Mr. Gyton was always running over from London; she wished he would either propose or stay away; and yet, she argued, a man must have some opportunity for making up his mind. Altogether, I cannot say that the position of the Drewitt family was one perfectly free from care; but still time travelled on—on—and the seasons

came and went; as they will do whether people are happy or whether people are sad.

It was summer once again, and though there is, perhaps, no town in the three kingdoms where the country seems so near and stone walls so little oppressive as in Dublin, still Mrs. Drewitt missed the hills, and the valleys, and the ocean more than she would have cared to acknowledge.

She had loved Connemara, and she had no other strong ties to any part of the earth. Mother, and father, and sister, had long been dead, and Sir Everard Ebbutt was married again, and her sister's children were very aristocratic young ladies, who would scarcely have cared to acknowledge so very unfortunate an individual for their aunt. Altogether, she mourned greatly after Connemara; and many a time when she and Geraldine were walking along the Monkstown Road, or pacing slowly round Stephen's Green, or sitting at work together in their modestly-furnished house, the poor lady would say suddenly—"I wonder how the Twelve Pins are looking now, Geraldine! Must not the sea seem calm seen from Durrow cliffs to-day?"

"Yes, mamma," Geraldine would answer, a little guiltily conscious that she had kept one

thing from her mother's knowledge, viz., her own refusal of Durrow and its owner.

She could have given a comfortable home for life to her mother; she could have let her spend all the remaining days of her life among the scenes and the people she had learned to love so much—and she refused.

Had she done right? For many days Geraldine pondered that question over and over again, and at last took courage and referred it to her mother.

They were sitting side by side in one of the loneliest parts of the Phœnix Park—in one of the glades where the blackberries and the brambles grow—and in reply to a remark from Mrs. Drewitt about the quietness being pleasant—about the place being almost as solitary as Connemara, though so close to Dublin, Geraldine took her mother's hand in hers, and said—

"Mamma, I want to ask you something."

"He has proposed"—that was Mrs. Drewitt's first idea, as she beheld her daughter's face covered with blushes. "He has proposed"—the "he" having reference to Mr. Gyton, who was at that present moment galloping as fast as an Irish horse

could take him to the Broadstone Terminus, whence he was soon travelling, at the mild pace which seems in fashion across the Channel by express train, to Galway.

"I wish you were coming down with me, old fellow," he said to Harold Drewitt, who had accompanied him to the station, and who stood with his hands on the top of the [carriage-door, looking very wretched and disconsolate. "A run into Connemara would do you good."

"I know that," Harold answered, mournfully.

"Ask leave, and come down on Saturday. There is a car or something that will bring you on from Galway to Durrow in no time; and my uncle will be delighted. Shall I tell him to expect you?"

"I don't see how I can get away," hesitated the boy.

"Nonsense; come on Saturday. Remember, I shall be looking out for you. Good-bye;" and the train steamed away from the platform, and went leisurely onwards into the country, through which it proceeded in a quiet, inoffensive manner, stopping at all sorts of out-of-the-way stations, where no passengers ever seemed to get in or out;

but where there was always a knot of idlers collected to see the engine and carriages, as if the seventh wonder of the world were taking a little tour through Ireland.

"No need to ask where one is," remarked Mr. Gyton to a fellow-passenger, who chanced to be an Englishman; "battered hats, short pipes, ragged clothes, and plenty of policemen—I beg their pardons—of the constabulary force."

"Fine country, though," returned the other.

"So I am told," answered Mr. Gyton, drily.

"And the women are so handsome! positively, walking about Dublin yesterday I met hundreds of lovely faces!" pursued the enthusiastic gentleman.

"The town is not large," remarked his companion, "and it is within the bounds of possibility that you may have met the same faces many times over."

"There is something in that," considered the other.

"And then," continued Mr. Gyton, "if you pay particular attention to the subject, you will observe that most Irishwomen—the women who wear gloves I mean—have a slit in those gloves;

either the lady's hands are plump, in which case there is an aperture at the side; or her fingers are long, in which case the nails make a way for themselves through the tips; or the articles are of an inferior make, which causes gaps about the thumb; or they are too small and refuse to button. I have made gloves my study," added the young swell, "and I never get into a railway carriage in which there is a woman without adding to my stock of information. I came up from Kingston yesterday morning with a young lady, and 'pon my honour, for a long time I thought she had on mittens, she was out at every finger down to the middle joint!" and Mr. Gyton complacently surveyed his own well-fitting glove, towards which his companion's glance was directed also.

"Do you smoke?" asked the younger man at last, presenting his cigar-case to the stranger, who, being graciously pleased to avail himself of the offered politeness, lit one of Mr. Gyton's prime Havannahs, and the pair, stretched out, one on each side the carriage, smoked until they reached Mullingar, at which point they abandoned their cigars, and wrapping their railway rugs about them, slept on until the guard came to collect the tickets and to

inform them that "when they reached the next station they'd be there."

"A most original and valuable piece of information," remarked Mr. Gyton, yawning desperately. "Now what do you make out of that—we shall be there? Does he mean we shall be at the next station, or at Galway?"

"The next station is Galway," replied the other, referring to his time-table, and failing in his sleepy condition of mind to perceive any wit in the young man's brilliant remarks. "I hope we shall be able to get a bed."

"If my memory serves me right, you can have your choice of about a hundred," answered Mr. Gyton, collecting his effects, and humming an opera air softly the while.

This was the "he" to whom Mrs. Drewitt had mentally referred while waiting for the rest of her daughter's sentence.

"You often talk, mamma, about Connemara, about the mountains, about the Atlantic, about those exquisite little bays, about all sorts of things, in fact," and Geraldine leaned back her head till it rested gently on her mother's shoulder as she spoke.

"Yes, love."

"Would you like to go back there, mamma—to go back to live?" and the evening sunbeams rested upon the pair, upon the deep mourning of mother and child, and Mrs. Drewitt stretched out her hand towards those patches of golden light as though she could touch and retain them.

"That would depend, Geraldine," was the answer. "Home to me is now wherever my children are: if you were all in Connemara, I should love the West; as you are all in Dublin, I am learning to love it."

"You are certain, sure, positive, mamma?" and the pretty head nestled itself down on Mrs. Drewitt's shoulder as well as was possible, considering the millinery miracle, which seemed to be stuck on the top of various rolls and twists of hair.

"Certain, love—why?"

"Because, mamma, we might all go back to Connemara—to Durrow, if I were to marry Mr. Pryor. He asked me, and I said no; and I have been miserable ever since — wondering, wondering, whether it was not wrong of me, when we are so poor, and when he likes me so much."

There was a long pause, during the continuance of which Mrs. Drewitt held her daughter's hand in hers, and stroked it slowly, slowly, very tenderly and very gently. "Poor fellow," she said at last, and Geraldine began to cry.

"Have I done wrong, mamma? have I done wrong?"

"You do not love him, darling?"

"No, mamma."

"You would only marry him for the sake of Durrow, and for what he might do for me, and Harold, and Brian?"

"Yes, mamma."

"Then, Geraldine, you have done quite right, and never vex yourself about the matter again. Only it is a pity of him, a great pity!" And Mrs. Drewitt took up her daughter's hand and commenced stroking it once more.

"I felt that, mamma," whispered the girl, "but I could not help saying no. I thought only of myself then; but I have cried myself to sleep many a night since thinking about you."

"My poor child, and I never knew anything about it," said the mother, sorrowfully.

"I could not tell you. I was afraid you might

be vexed; I was vexed myself, and——" Geraldine paused.

"And what, darling?"

"Oh, mamma—mamma!" that was all the confession, but it was enough. The mother knew the daughter's secret, and the daughter knew her mother understood the whole business without another word being spoken.

They sat on for a few minutes longer in silence, and then they walked home side by side still saying little, and that little having no connexion with the subject on which they had been talking.

Mrs. Drewitt made no further remark, asked no single question; only that night Geraldine cried herself to sleep in her mother's arms, and until the early dawning of the summer's morning Mrs. Drewitt lay awake, and thought about the husband she should see no more on earth — about the children whose future seemed so vague and uncertain.

As for Harold, the household had not much of a life with him until he worried permission out of his employers to grant him a holiday; then the very same evening he started for Galway, and

worked his way thence by car and coach to Duranmore, where Mr. Pryor met him.

"Your letter and Frank's must have crossed each other," he said. "He left for Dublin by the first train from Galway this morning, and wrote begging you to meet him at Morrison's."

"Then we both slept at the same hotel last night, and never knew it," said Harold, disconsolately; "will he be long in Dublin?"

"Only a few hours. He leaves to-night for Holyhead, and is going direct to London. His father is very ill."

"Wasn't it queer we should both be in Galway together, and never know it?" repeated Harold, whose sympathies were none of the keenest, and who would not have cared very much who lived or who died providing he had his little comforts. Mr. Pryor, though he had known much more singular coincidences in the course of his life, agreed that it was "queer," while he gave the reins into Harold's eager hands, and let him drive back the ten miles to Durrow within the hour.

For the sister's sake, Mr. Pryor was very kind to Harold, though his affection for the boy had never been overwhelming, and consequently Harold

found his stay in Connemara exceedingly pleasant, and was very much grieved—grieved to the extent of tears when he had to leave.

"My time's up," he said disconsolately to Mr. Pryor.

"Is it?" remarked that gentleman, sympathetically; "you must get leave to come and see me next summer."

"Ay; but that is such a devilishly long time to look forward to," answered Harold.

"You must employ the interval in breaking yourself of a bad habit," Mr. Pryor observed.

"What is that?" asked Harold, quickly.

"Swearing," was the reply.

"There is no harm in swearing—everybody swears but you." Fancy the feelings of a middle-aged gentleman who was obliged to bear such speeches from a lad. "I don't know a fellow that does not swear," went on Harold; "but then, to be sure, all the fellows I know are young."

It would have done Mr. Pryor good to have pitched Master Harold over Durrow cliff, but one cannot always do as one likes in this world, and he refrained.

"You may think I am making fun," resumed

the boy, "but I am not: next summer does seem a devilishly long time away—that is not swearing, it is truth—and I sometimes feel when I am looking about me here that I am looking for the last time—you may laugh if you like, but I do."

"What does the lad mean?" marvelled Mr. Pryor.

"Just what I say; neither more nor less: maybe I may see Connemara again, and maybe not; but most likely maybe not. I have gone to every place I could think of to-day, and said good-bye. I feel that I shall never come back—never—never—never." And the boy twined his hand in the branch of a tree against which he was leaning, and, resting his head on his arm, sobbed aloud.

"Would you rather not return to Dublin at present?" asked Mr. Pryor, who really felt impressed by Harold's grief. "I dare say I could make it all right with your employers."

"No, I must go; but I feel that I am going to meet my fate, Mr. Pryor. If nothing comes of this, try not to think me a fool; but last night, after I had been asleep for about a couple of hours, I awoke suddenly in a cold perspiration and shivering from head to foot. I think you might have heard my

heart beating. I was in such a horrible fright, and there was a dread on me—a terror: what was it? tell me;" and the boy turned towards Mr. Pryor, who thought in a moment about Maxwell's words—

"He will never make old bones;" and it was true, poor Harold!

"You were ill," answered the Englishman.

"I was not ill," returned Harold, petulantly; "I was as well as you are. I had neither ache nor pain; only I was frightened: what frightened me?"

"You had been dreaming disagreeably."

"I had not been dreaming at all—at least if I had I do not remember anything about it. I was wide awake in the time you could clap hands, and thinking about death, about Eversbeg, and my father, and that Kathie I used to hear them talking over when I was a child, Maxwell's sister. I have not got over it all day. Do you think me a coward? I am not a coward; only—only it would be very hard to die and never see Connemara again."

"It would, Harold; but I hope and believe you will see Connemara many times before you die. And promise me you will go (quietly by yourself, you know, and without alarming your mother) to

some good doctor in Dublin, and tell him you are not very strong, and to give you a tonic. Promise me," and Mr. Pryor slipped a five-pound note into the boy's hand, which Harold looked at as well as tears would let him see it.

"In the night," he began again, "I made good resolutions—I did, Mr. Pryor. I wish I could keep to them; I wish I could quit drinking; I wish I could quit vexing my mother. I'd like to be good. I think it must be nice to feel good when one wakes like that in the middle of the night."

That was the note on which Harold's sentences began and ended. It was the common chord of his conversation, until at last Mr. Pryor became really anxious.

"He would not get on this way if he were in good health," thought the barrister, and when he parted with Harold he felt many misgivings as to whether he ought not to go so far as Galway, at any rate, with him.

But there was an absurdity on the face of the thing which could not fail to strike Mr. Pryor. "The boy does not want to go to work," he thought; "and if we make too much of him he will

never be good for anything." As for spirits, out of doors, Harold's were at fever-point!

"Put on your hat, man," he said to Doyle, who, happy as a lord, was standing flourishing an old white apology for a hat in the middle of the High Street of Duranmore. "I have often been drunk myself."

"And good-bye, Kitty," he called out to the barmaid at the "Marsden Arms;" "see that you're married against I come back."

"Good-bye, Maxwell," he shouted to his cousin, who was riding by on Trumpeter. "Take care of Madcap; I may come down some day in the hunting season, and ask you to let me have one more ride on her."

"And good-bye, Mr. Pryor," he said last of all; "try not to think about what I told you—it was folly."

"Write to me what the doctor says, Harold," entreated his friend. "All right," was the reply and the car drove off.

Far as he could see, Harold kept waving first his hat and then his handkerchief, and it was not until the vehicle turned round the base of the mountain, on the road to Cragantlet, and bore the

boy off through the land of a hundred lakes, that Mr. Pryor could prevail on himself to retrace his way towards Durrow.

He could not sleep for thinking of the lad; he resolved to write to Brian concerning him, and he worried himself almost into a fever over the matter, while Harold was shouting out snatches of songs, and pitching compliments to the pretty country girls as they tripped so daintily over the grass by the wayside, and telling stories, and plaguing the driver's life out to let him take the reins, and eating his supper in Galway, and lying fast asleep in one of those huge beds at the Railway Hotel in which Finn Macoul and his whole family might find ample accommodation.

"If you believe me, sir," said Harold, who travelled second class, to a fat priest, his fellow-passenger in the railway carriage the next morning as far as Athlone, "I had to ring the bell to find myself; I went wandering over the bed every time I woke trying to discover where on earth I was;" and the priest took kindly to the boy, and laughed at his light-hearted merriment, and all the way up to Dublin, Harold found some one to talk to, some one to laugh with.

As he drove along the streets leading from Broadstone Station to Carlisle Bridge, he chatted to the car-driver, and was, as the man expressed it, "in great heart entirely." "Pull up at the first shop," ordered Mr. Harold, "where they sell cigars; I want some;" and obedient to the command the man pulled up at a shop in College Green, where Harold alighted.

He picked over the cigars with the air of a connoisseur, and, selecting three dozen of what he considered the best, threw down a pound-note in payment. He had changed Mr. Pryor's gift in Galway, and this pound-note was part of the proceeds.

"I must send out for silver, sir," said the man behind the counter, who had never taken his eyes off Harold's face (when Harold was not looking at him) for a moment.

"All right," remarked Harold.

"Sorry to keep you so long waiting," remarked the shopkeeper, politely handing his customer a chair.

"It is of no consequence;" but Harold was kicking his heels with impatience for all that.

Time went on. "I think," said the lad, "they must be quarrying that silver."

"Not at all," said the shopkeeper; and at the words his messenger re-entered the place, in company with a policeman.

"There is your prisoner," remarked the cigar-dealer; and the policeman laid his hand on Harold's shoulder.

"Come along, young gentleman," he said. "The less fuss you make, the better."

Advice which Harold followed by striking the policeman right between the eyes, and then asking what the devil he meant by his cursed impudence.

"It is your cursed impudence, I think," said the shopkeeper, "coming here to change another of your notes."

"I never set foot in your doors before, to my knowledge," answered Harold, amazed.

"Well, you have to mine, which is more to the purpose," was the reply.

"Will you tell me what you all mean? Are you all mad?" asked Harold, who began to feel that the affair was getting serious.

Then half a dozen people began talking at once, and all Harold could make out as they dragged him along the streets was—

"Robbery of two thousand pounds—fifty pounds reward—assaulting a constable in the discharge of his duty—passing the stopped notes."

"But now look here, sir," remarked Harold, to the inspector. "I know no more what you are all talking about than a baby in arms. That is my name and address; and I have just come up from Galway, where I have been staying at Durrow Park with Mr. Geoffry Pryor."

"You are not bound to criminate yourself," interposed the inspector. "What you say after this caution will be used in evidence against you."

"Let it. I am trying to vindicate myself—though, upon my conscience, I have not the remotest idea of the nature of the crime with which you charge me. I tell you what it is," he added, "you have got the wrong bird in crib; you must have mistaken me for somebody else; before God, I know nothing of any two thousand pounds!" he added passionately. "I never saw so much money together in all my life—I never did!"

"If you can persuade his worship of that, it will be all the better for you," was the incredulous

reply; and forthwith Harold was locked up, but not before he sent this message to his mother:—

"Tell her," he said to a policeman, "that I am in the station-house; I have not the remotest idea why. I have done nothing. I cannot think what you have brought me here for—unless you are all mad."

But though the police delivered this message with tolerable accuracy, they persisted in hunting over all his little possessions, trying to find some trace of the missing money — of something to criminate the boy.

"You see he is innocent, you see," Mrs. Drewitt kept saying, in her frantic sorrow.

"Yes, ma'am, we see," answered the police; and all through that long, long night Geraldine and her mother kept repeating, as if to reassure their own faith, "He is innocent! Harold could never have done a thing like that!"

END OF VOL. II.

LONDON: PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, STAMFORD STREET AND CHARING CROSS.